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Arthur  
May 2008  
Vol 2, Number 29  
www.arthurmag.com  
arthurworldservice.com

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Laris Kreslins  
Publisher Emeritus

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“Reviewers” **C & D** are serving a one-issue suspension for misconduct. They return next issue. Maybe.



# Letters to the Editor

## Someone knew Someone Who Knew A Rabbi...

Dear *Arthur*,  
So it's been a few months since the clan decamped from Brooklyn and moved back to my old stomping grounds of New Orleans, and it's been an incredible experience so far, and if I had to sum it all up all of its strange beauty in one sentence, it would have to be this:

I'm convinced that if New Orleans didn't exist, Alan Moore would have to invent it.

Folks here are dreamers and schemers, and the majority of the scheming and dreaming goes on in the city's bars, taverns, watering holes, speakeasies and so on. Tall tales, big plans and big ideas are everyday currency, and whether they realize it or not, it's my opinion that everybody in New Orleans is a pulp writer at heart, a spinner of weird tales of the fantastic and supernatural, a closet Stan Lee or Robert E. Howard. Everybody here is a godlike creator of alternate realities. There's one New Orleans, the "real" city, which is pretty bizarre and fantasmic in its own right. It needs no help to be confounding, dangerous and beautiful, because it's all of those things automatically.

But then there's the Uber-New Orleans, the even stranger city, the one invented in the bars. (Let's pay DC Comics a tribute and call it New Orleans-2) is populated by armies of great bands, classic films, sublime paintings, amazing books and so on. This is not to say that people here DON'T produce things—there's art going on in New Orleans, art and industry and mad creativity that is at a constant boil. But coming up with mad, drunken ideas for epic works of fiction is a favorite sport of three in the morning New Orleanians, a pastime so endemic that folks here joke about the amount of effort spent talking about things instead of doing them.

If ten percent of these ideas were ever seen to completion, the world would be a much weirder, much more interesting place. I'm certain that the same story could be told about bars the world over, but there's just something about the way it's done in New Orleans that makes me feel that it's a city of a million would-have-beens and could-have-beens, the urban equivalent of a thousand issues of What If...? comics.

But let me get to my point. Every once in a while, just like in a comic book, New Orleans and New Orleans-2 intersect and there's a massive crossover event and continuity just goes all to hell and it's wonderful. This happens when someone makes one of these bar ideas actually happen, as was the case recently when my friend Alison Fensterstock had a brainstorm. The idea?

To have the Noisician Coalition, a marching club made up of a loose aggregate of ne'er-do-wells and malcontents who bang on trashcan drums and jerry-rigged electronic noisemakers, to play at a local Purim service. Of course!

And this is where New Orleans-2 comes in – the idea was repeated in the light of day and it was run with. Someone knew someone who knew a rabbi, and the rabbi was cool, so the gig was booked—the Noise Parade would be part of the traditional drowning out of Haman's name at the Anshe Sfard Synagogue over on Carondelet Street. When yours truly got the news that members of the N.C. were needed to add to the ruckus, he was in a bar and semi-disbelieving, but agreed to it nevertheless.

So cut to Purim—only six members of the group can make it, but that's plenty: group founders Matt Vaughan Black and Robert Starnes, L.J., Churchy, Fensterstock and me. We're decked out in our traditional red, black and white garb. The congregants in the synagogue are dressed even more outlandishly and it's rad. Finally, the service starts. An older gentleman begins to read the Megillah of Esther in Hebrew and we're all waiting around to hear the magic tragic name of that sneaky murdering bastard Haman to be uttered and when it is—wham! The Noisician Coalition erupts quickly and messily. Sirens wail, Theremins are distorted and I, the sole member on percussion, bang out the barely recognizable rhythm of "Big Chief." Smiles erupt throughout the synagogue. This, the assembled folks seem to be thinking, is RAD.

And so the megillah continues, and with every "Haman" we



Alia Penner

blast it out again and again and again, even going so far as to actually parade around the joint a couple of times. The service winds down, then, and everybody hustles down to the basement for raspberry hamentashen, meatballs, kosher wine and whiskey. Dancing erupts, thanks to the tunes of awesome local jazz-klezmer-marching mutants the Panorama Jazz Band. Dudes are doing flips, people are clapping and every once in awhile a teenager tries to snake a drink.

Later, as yours truly and a few members of the Coalition share a butt in front of the synagogue, a car rolls up, stops. The passenger side window rolls down and an African-American gentleman leans over to speak.

"What y'all doing in there?"  
"It's a Purim celebration, man!"  
"Can I come?"  
"Hell yeah. C'mon in."  
"Okay," he says. "But you see, I'm in a wheel-chair. I drive with some gears."

He demonstrates how the gears work. We're all impressed – it's a cool set-up.

"So I'm going to drive around and be back later. Is that okay?"  
"Sure!"

And then he drives off, using his gears, and we watch him go and, well, all there is to say is thank heavens for New Orleans-2 and crossovers in general.

Until the next time, I remain,

Gabe Soria  
*New Orleans, Louisiana*

### UPDATE FROM OUR OLIGARCHY '08 CORRESPONDENT

The Republican Illuminati/Kingmakers wanted McCain—so it is written and so it shall b). In this post-chad environment, I'm not sure they can rig Florida again.... They have almost nothing to lose this time—whoever takes over this mess is deeply screwed. If I were a conservative oligarch, I'd focus on Congress and let the Democrats hang themselves; then come back strong in 2012 with "I told you so"-style propaganda.

Stephen Malkmus, *Portland, Oregon*

## LABOR DONATED BY...

**Eisa Ambrogio** lives in San Francisco and plays music in The Magik Markers.

**Joe O'Brien** edits *Flop Sweat*, a bottom-tier comedy publication, and is at work on his first novel. He lives in Los Angeles. *Two-Lane Blacktop* is his favorite film.

**Eryn Branch** studies fashion in Los Angeles and enjoys listening to rap music.

**The Center for Tactical Magic** is a moderate, international think-tank dedicated to the research, development, and deployment of all types of magic toward achieving the "Great Work" of positive social transformation.

**Byron Coley** plays the hand he's dealt.

**Erik Davis** is a writer, fingerpicker and speaker who lives in San Francisco. His last book was *The Visionary State: A Journey Through California's Spiritual Landscape*. Nearly all of his published articles can be found on his website, [techgnosis.com](http://techgnosis.com), where he regularly posts on music, religion, technology and other abiding mysteries.

**Kevin Ferguson** contributes to L.A. Record and District and is about to eat a cornbread waffle.

**Molly Frances** and **Mark Frohman** have completed their term as *Arthur's* art directors. They promise only to nick a few office supplies on their way out. [colornational.com](http://colornational.com)

**Lisa Hanawalt** lives in Los Angeles and enjoys drawing conquistadors, car accidents, creatures and complicated clothing. [lisahanawalt.com](http://lisahanawalt.com)

**Joseph Harper** and his psychic ferret (singing together as Virgin Rosemary, [myspace.com/thevirginrosemary](http://myspace.com/thevirginrosemary)) look forward to the arrival of the love epidemic when our souls leave

our bodies to be sewn up into a beautiful universe quilt.**Nance Kiehm** is a radical ecologist, system designer, urban forager, teacher, artist and mad scientist of the living. She has worked in Australia, England, Scandinavia, the Caribbean and various places in the United States and Mexico. She is a promoter of direct participatory experiences.

**Jeaneen Lund** spent all her Junior High School afternoons searching for the Valley Girl soundtrack on vinyl. She really digs Sparks. You can see more of her photos at [jeaneenlund.com](http://jeaneenlund.com).

**Thurston Moore** is in studio working with Religious Knives on new d-o-pe jammer.

**Joe O'Brien** edits *Flop Sweat*, a bottom-tier comedy publication, and is at work on his first novel. He lives in Los Angeles. *Two-Lane Blacktop* is his favorite film.

**Alia Penner** is collecting pieces of the Rose Constellation for a new psychedelic healing visions project. [aliapenner.com](http://aliapenner.com)

**Plastic Crimewave** aka Steve Krakow writes/draws the *Galactic Zoo Dossier*, the "Secret History of Chicago Music" comic strip and numerous posters/album covers. He guitarjams with Plastic Crimewave Sound, drmwpn and various ensembles. He also curates the occasional festival, tv show and gallery show.

**Ned Raggett** ponders cooking with kohlrabi, the evanescent nature of digital culture, political follies and eight million books—among other things—at [nedraggett.wordpress.com](http://nedraggett.wordpress.com).

**David Crosby Reeves** is working on a militia project and riding around on a motorcyle trying to eat everywhere that Jonathon Gold eats. Also sometimes he writes.

**Joseph Remnant** spends most of his time at a drawing table, avoiding human interaction and thus failing to establish meaningful and healthy relationships. Hence his artwork. [Remnantart.net](http://Remnantart.net)

**Arik Roper** is at his desk working very hard on an illustrated book about psychoactive mushrooms.

**Chris Rubino** as a child lived on a commune in New Mexico, then in Boston with Irish people, now lives in Brooklyn with Italians and college graduates. [www.chrisrubino.com](http://www.chrisrubino.com)

**Sharon Rudahl** marched with Martin Luther King. She was one of the original Underground Cartoonists. Her most recent work is *A Dangerous Woman, the Graphic Biography of Emma Goldman*, published by New Press.

**Douglas Rushkoff** writes books about media, technology, and values. He's currently working on a project called "Corporatized," which will explore how chartered corporations disconnected us from reality. [rushkoff.com](http://rushkoff.com)

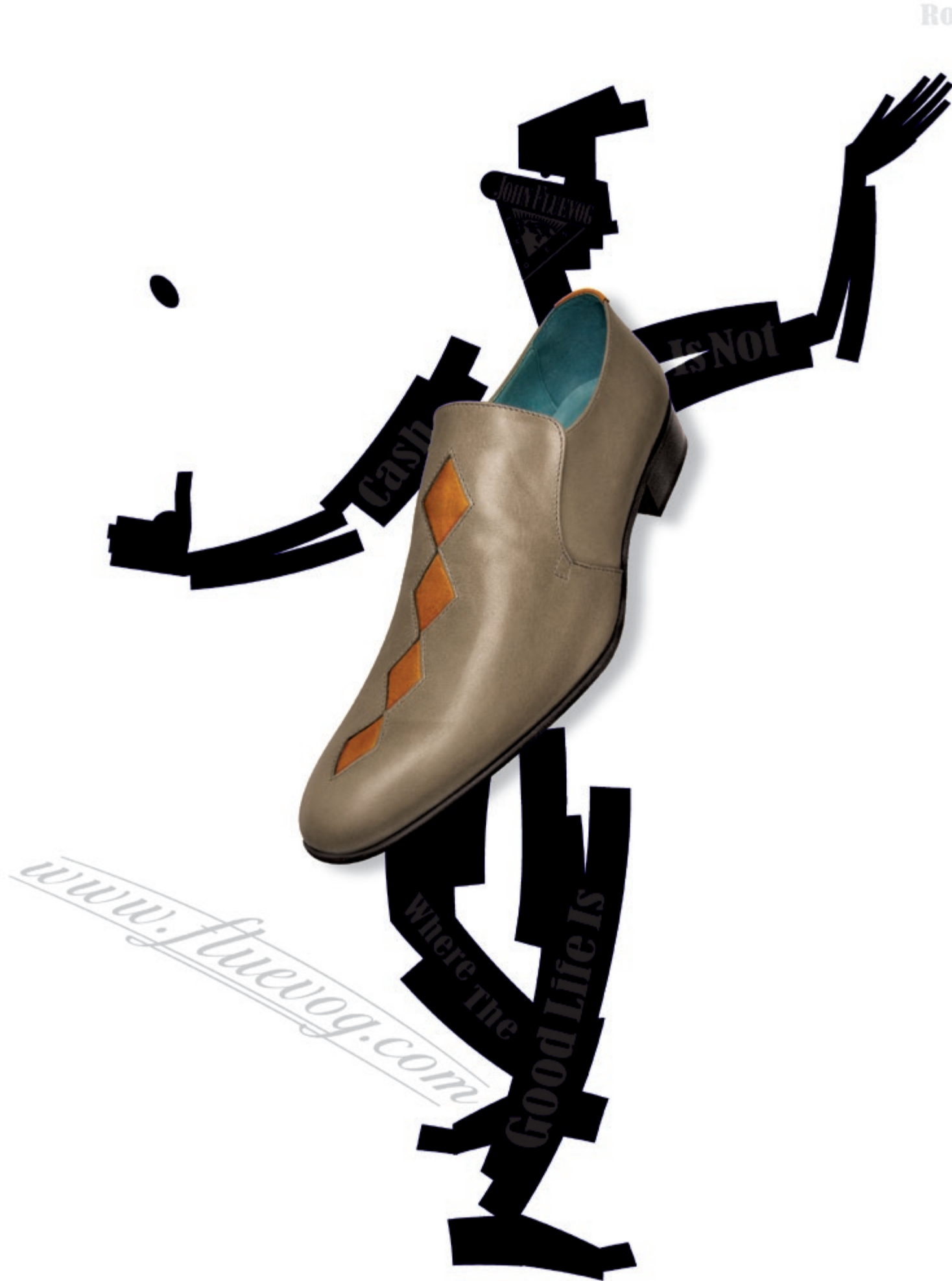
**Greg Shewchuk** is the director of the Land of Plenty Skateboard Foundation. [www.thelandofplenty.org](http://www.thelandofplenty.org)

**Aiyana Udesen** lives in San Francisco and rescues mice from the animal shelter.

**M. Wartella** is an underground cartoonist and animator in New York City.

**Peter Lamborn Wilson** is a poet-scholar of Sufism and Western Hermeticism and a well-known radical-anarchist social thinker.

**Chris Ziegler** is editor of *L.A. Record* and music editor of *District* and is about to drink a cup of coffee.







There's two kinds of people asking me about the economy lately: people with money wanting to know how to keep it "safe," and people without money, wanting to know how to keep safe, themselves. Maybe it's the difference between those two concerns that best explains the underlying nature of today's fiscal crisis. Is what's going on in the economy right now really worse than anything that's happened in the past few decades? Are we heading towards a bank collapse like what happened in 1929? Or something even worse?

On a certain level, none of these questions really matter. Not as they're being phrased, anyway. What we think of as "the economy" today isn't real, it's virtual. It's a speculative marketplace that has very little to do with getting real things to the people who need them, and much more to do with providing ways for passive investors to grow their capital. This economy of markets was created to give the rising merchant class in the late middle ages a way to invest their winnings. Instead of actually working, or even injecting capital into new enterprises, they learned to "make

What we think of as "the economy" today isn't real, it's virtual. It's a speculative marketplace that has very little to do with getting real things to the people who need them.

markets" in things that were scarce. Or, rather, in things that could be made scarce, like land. That's how speculation was born. Speculation in land, gold, coal, food...pretty much anything. Because the wealthy had such so much excess capital to invest, they made markets in stuff that the rest of us actually used. The problem is that when coal or corn isn't just fuel or food but also an asset class, the laws of supply and demand cease to be the principle forces determining their price. When there's a lot of money and few places to invest it, anything considered a speculative asset becomes overpriced. And then real people can't afford the stuff they need. The speculative economy is related to the real economy, but more as a parasite than a positive force. It is detached from the real needs of people, and even detached from the real commerce that goes on between humans. It is a form of meta-commerce, like a Las Vegas casino betting on the outcome of a political election. Only the bets, in this case, change the real costs of the things being bet on. That's what happened in the housing market and the credit market—which, these days, are actually the same thing. Here's the story, in the simplest terms: Bush's tax cuts and other measures favoring the rich led to the biggest redistribution of wealth from poor to rich in American history. The result was that the wealthy—the in-



illustration by M. Wartella

vestment class—had more money to invest, or lend, than there were people and businesses looking to borrow. The easiest way to bring more borrowers into the system—and to create more of a market for money—was to promote homeownership in America. This is precisely what the Bush administration did, touting home ownership as an American right. Of course, they weren't talking about home ownership at all, but rather pushing people to borrow money tied to the value of a house. If people could be persuaded to take mortgages on homes, real estate values would go up for those already invested (like land trusts and real estate funds) and banks would have a market for the excess money they had accumulated. In short, there was a surplus of credit in the system. Americans were encouraged to borrow in the form of mortgages, which created demand for the credit banks wanted to sell. In many cases the credit itself wasn't even real, but leveraged off some other inflated commodity that the bank or investor may have owned. Banks and mortgage companies invented some really shady and difficult-to-understand mortgage contracts, designed to get people to borrow more money than they could. Banks didn't care so much about lending money to people who wouldn't be able to pay it back, because that's not how they were going to earn their money, anyway. They provided the money for mortgage companies to

lend, and in return won the rights to underwrite the loans when they were packaged and sold to other people and institutions. So a bank might provide the cash for a bunch of loans, but then get it back, plus a huge commission, when those loans were packaged and sold to someone else. Lots of people take out mortgages, and housing prices rise. This is used as evidence to convince more people that real estate is a great investment, and more people buy into the housing bubble. Lots of these people put little or no money down, and buy mortgages whose interests rates are going to change for the worse. But they believe the price of their home is inevitably going to go up, and pin their futures on the idea that they can refinance their mortgage before their rate changes. Since the house will be worth more, the mortgage for what they owe should be easier to get; it will represent a smaller percentage of the new total cost of the house. Of course, this was dumb. Banks didn't really care (because they weren't holding the bad paper) but the people investing in those "mortgage-backed securities" were slowly getting wise to the fact that many of the borrowers were in over their heads. What to do? The credit industry went ahead and lobbied Washington to change the bankruptcy laws. While corporations could claim bankruptcy and stop paying for their retirees' health

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**SOME NEW CRIMEWAVE STUFF**

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This month I ditched my old 17 inch Sanyo TV and bought a big flat acronym—an Samsung LNT2653H LCD HDTV to be precise. My main motivation was visual hedonism. Though I don't watch a ton of movies, I am something of a cineaste, having gone to college in the days when a decent sized campus like ours might boast a dozen film societies. Until recently, I fed my Janus jones in rep cinemas, while at home I watched lighter fare—B movies or anime or leeched HBO shows. But rep cinemas are dying, even in a deeply mediated town like San Francisco, and I am simply not willing to squint any longer at letter boxed DVDs. I wanted a screen with an aspect ratio, if not a size, worthy of The Man from Laramie or Kagemusha. And so I entered the cacophonous purgatory of Best Buy to check out the wares.

I've always found TV shops kind of disturbing. It's something about having all the machines simultaneously replicating the same program, like a flickering clone farm. But what really spooked me out this time was an immense split screen that was designed to demonstrate some Samsung feature called Auto Motion Plus 120Hz. On deck was the last Pirates of the Caribbean movie, a product that will also get you thinking about clones. On the right, you had the "normal" image, which looked like

This is the sunset of cinema,  
folks, a blazing analog dusk,  
and it is giving way to a digi-  
tal night that is full of data and  
noise and still can't really get  
the blacks right.

a somewhat tinny and pointilistic film—HDTV's reasonable digital echo of the silver screen. But the Auto Motion Plussed image on the left was so lifelike and three-dimensional that it destroyed any sense of film at all. It was as if the screen was no longer an enchanted mirror, but a telerepresence window onto a Hollywood sound stage where an overpaid babe in a costume was stumbling around with some dumb props hoping the CG guys would make it all make sense.

In his much-reproduced essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," written in 1936, Walter Benjamin saw cinema as the paradigm of a new kind of technological media that would undermine the traditional "aura" of art, the semi-sacred quality of being that once infused individual works of creative genius. Looking at Keira Knightly's makeup flake into the empty air of Auto Motion Plus, it was suddenly clear to me that we still have some aura left to lose: the analog aura of film itself, an aura that has a great deal to do with the complex chemical processes which give certain film stocks and eras an unmistakable timbre. This is the sunset of cinema, folks, a blazing analog dusk, and it is giving way to a digital night that is full of data and noise and still can't really get the blacks right.



illustration by Chris Rubino

Then all the screens around me started throwing footballs in unison, and it started to make sense. The future screen, the future TV, is not about cinema but about simulating presence, a carnal ultrafidelity that's good for sports, and reality TV, and porn. I must have had low blood sugar or something—box stores do this to me—but a vague apocalyptic dread descended upon me, as I imagined these home theaters invading millions of homes and literally sucking the life out of them, like phantasmic vampires, or digitally remastered portraits of Dorian Grey. Screens that grow more lifelike in exact proportion to the ontological exhaustion of the world outside, a world flattened and set groaning under the weight of us, our distractions, our hunger for figments. A verse from the book of Ezekiel welled up from the depths: "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth."

That said, as long as we are stuck in our chambers we might as well get some good imagery on the wall, which is why I shook myself out of my apocalyptic fugue and continued to shop. But what to buy? If I was a rich guy with a big house I'd definitely buy one of the big LCD HDTVS with Auto Motion Plus (for the...sports). But I share a small apartment with a lovely lady who doesn't really watch or want a television at all, and who certainly does not want one lording over our wood-paneled living room with all the warmth and grace of an MRI machine. So I bought a 26 inch LCD with good stereo sound to keep in the office. That night I emailed the Pilkdown Man in London, and mentioned the TV's "unfortunately small" size. "Wow," he wrote back, "we've entered a world where a 26" telly is small." I felt like an idiot.

**We are not a cable household, which means that we** watch TV, when we do, the old fashioned way: by suck-

ing analog signals from the sky with a cheap V-shaped antenna stuck on top of the set. Though this method may strike you as Paleolithic, old school aerials are still the signal suckage method of choice for roughly twenty million American households. These include folks who can't be bothered, people who can't afford cable or satellite, and cranks like us who don't want all that shit lurking just one remote away, ready to strike. Whoever we are, a great sword of Damocles now hangs in the airwaves over our heads, or rather, over our sets. Because as of February 17, 2009, the FCC has proclaimed that the entire analog broadcasting system, known as NTSC, will be permanently retired to make way for all-digital television. Without digital tuners, our old analog TVs are nothing more than monitors.

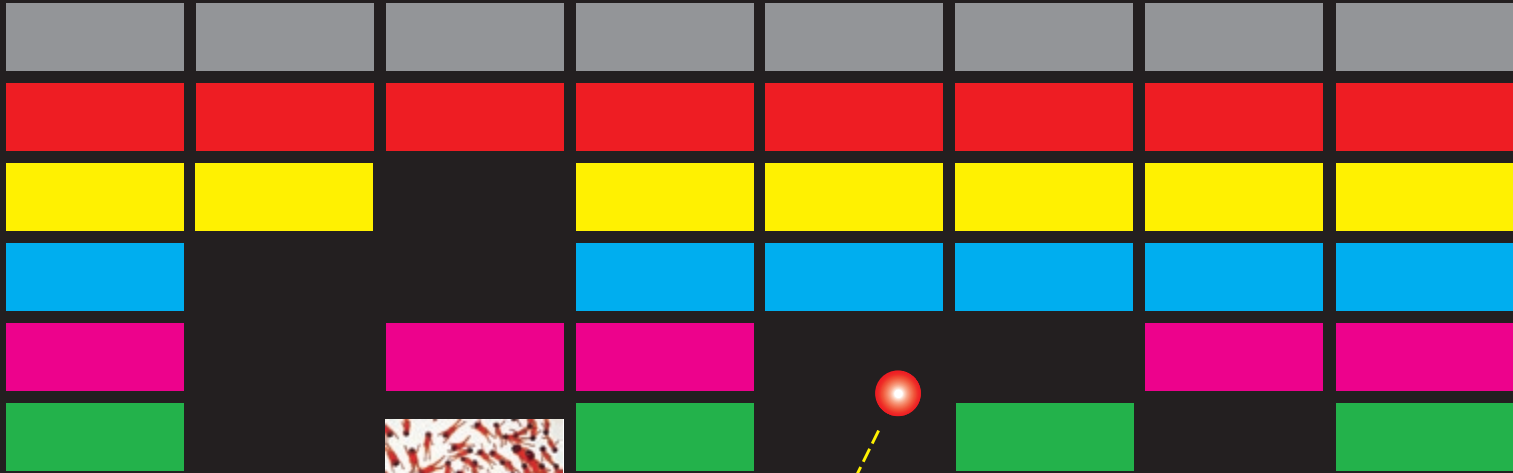
The United States is by no means paving the way here. Some European countries have already left analog behind, and pretty much everybody is signed up to make the switchover. The main reason for the change, of course, is money: manufacturers get to sell new-fangled sets, TV stations have the possibility of creating a number of new revenue streams, and the government gets to auction those tasty, wall-penetrating frequencies previously occupied by NTSC. One of the first things the government will do with that cash is to turn some of it over to local artists, pirate radio crews, and media activists who are being empowered to create innovative noncommercial programming and micobroadcast it over the freed-up channels—which after all are a public resource, like the national parks—to help prepare local communities for the imminent collapse of postmodern America.

JUST KIDDING! Instead, some of that auction money—up to a billion and a half dollars—will be used to cover the cost of a conversion program that will allow owners of analog TVs to continue to use their rigs. If you want to, your household can call up the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (Orwell

*continued on pg. 18*

NEW RELEASES IN STORES NOW

# BREAKIN OUT



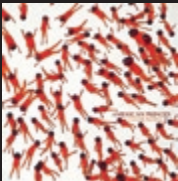
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*Flock*

With hooks galore amid a tapestry of moody, introspective nuances, **Bell X1** is now poised to ride the wave of their UK success on this side of the Atlantic. The US release of *Flock* is a limited-edition enhanced CD that includes three live videos, the "Rocky Took A Lover" animated music video, and two special tracks including a Chicken Lips remix of "Flame."



**THE APPLES IN STEREO**  
*Electronic Projects for Musicians*

The Apples in stereo's new album *Electronic Projects for Musicians* is a compilation that includes b-sides and rarities recorded between 1995-2007. It features three previously unreleased tracks: "Stephen Stephen," "The Apples in stereo Theme Song," and the highly anticipated "Dreams," an unfinished track from *Tone Soul Evolution*.



**AMERICAN PRINCES**  
*Other People*

"A few friends have said it's our '80s record, but it's probably more Tears for Fears or Tom Petty than New Order," says singer/guitarist David Slade. The group recorded at NYC studio The Fireplace with Chuck Brody, who's worked on records by the Wu-Tang Clan and Peter Bjorn and John.



**HELOISE & THE SAVOIR FAIRE**  
*Trash, Rats & Microphones*

An electrified collision of late-70's disco-infused dance punk and 80's synth-pop, the band has described by The Times UK as "somewhere between Goldfrapp and The Scissor Sisters." The album features guest vocals by Debbie Harry who recently called **Heloise & The Savior Faire** her favorite underground band.



**THOMAS FUNCTION**  
*Celebration*

**Thomas Function** love punk rock, but they love country, blues, new wave, garage rock, and the shit happening up the street too. Is America on the brink of a new rock 'n' roll renaissance? People who snapped up their instantly OOP singles, saw one of their chaotic shows, or participated in the fervid blogging about this bunch aren't betting against it.



**JAMIE LIDELL**  
*Jim*

Recorded in Berlin, Los Angeles and Paris, *Jim* takes even further what was started with "Multiply", finding the balance between the spontaneous creativity of his raw ideas and the careful craft and polish of a great record. *Jim* will switch you on in the morning, move you on the dance-floor and take you down in the small hours.



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# THE ROOTS OF CULTURE

“What kind of times are they, when talk about trees is almost a crime because it implies silence about so many horrors?”  
—*Bertolt Brecht* (To Those Born Later)



Most people have an appreciation for plants and make an effort to occasionally hike among them, repose in their shade or even co-habitate with them. And while it's safe to say that we recognize plants' value and usefulness, it's also a fair assessment to state that the plant kingdom is frequently taken for granted. When we're not trampling it, cutting it down, or eating it, we're usually ignoring it altogether.

Perhaps that's why the vast majority of modern people who encounter the idea of human/plant communication—or “psychobotany,” as we prefer to call it—find it strange. But it's equally strange that this viewpoint has become normalized. After all, anthropologists largely agree that people have been attempting communication with the plant kingdom for as long as there have been plants and people. So why is it considered “abnormal” to attempt communication with plants today? And what can we hope to accomplish by entering into such a conversation in the first place?

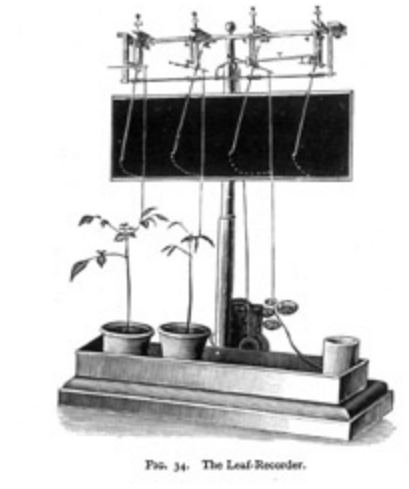
From engendered grudges and evolutionary angst to theological quibbles and accusations of entrapment, the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden has certainly been fertile ground for all sorts of controversy. But surely there's an upside. At the very least the Bible has given us a glimpse of Utopia: proto-hippies living blissfully in a magic garden. In one corner of paradise they receive vital-

## The ancient tree-huggers are reputed to have awarded wayward lumberjacks with disem-bowelment and death.

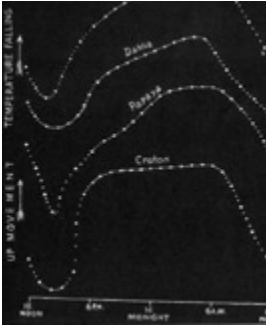
ity from the Tree of Life; in another they gain consciousness of self after sampling the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge.

Of course Genesis isn't the only religious text to promote the divinity within nature. The Egyptian god Osiris was often associated with the Acacia tree. The Babylonians regarded the Cedar to be divinely virtuous. In Norse mythology, Odin created humans from the ash tree. And Zeus could be beseeched at his oracle in a grove of giant oaks. Within Hinduism the great banyan tree still features as a prominent site of worship. Polynesian cultures maintain a belief in the mana that permeates not only the plant kingdom, but the entire world around us. Similarly, the indigenous Japanese Shinto religion (as well as a great many other pantheistic belief systems) still holds Nature to be imbued with various spirits.

And nature worship features prominently amongst pagan sects today much as it did thousands of years ago amongst the original Druids. Holding firm the belief that trees were sacred beings capable of communicating guidance and knowledge, these ancient tree-huggers are re-



Diagrams: Sir Jagadis Chunder Bose's Leaf Recorder and Plant Autographs. Photographs: Stills from a series of 1976 performances originally recorded for the film *The Secret Life of Plants*.



puted to have awarded wayward lumberjacks with disem-bowelment and death. (A punishment that makes Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front, and other so-called “eco-terrorists” of today look tame by comparison). In some cases, the Druids constructed elaborate rites and ritual celebrations to consult the trees. At other times it was enough to simply relax in the shade of a whispering willow.

On the other side of the planet, indigenous communities across the Americas looked to trees, plants and Mother Corn for guidance and wisdom. The insights hiding within mushrooms, peyote, morning glory seeds, and ayahuasca could be released through consumption, while tobacco, marijuana, and salvia divinorum spirits were consulted through smoking. In fact, the Aztecs reputedly built complex herb gardens and divined messages through visions encouraged by psychotropic plants and fungi.

When not directly communicating with the inner divinity of flora, the ingesting and smoking of plants and herbs could assist in lubricating efforts at diplomatic communication amongst various peoples. For example, the Native American “peace pipe” served as a sort of botanical moderator between warring clans, competing tribesmen, and the European colonizers. In Fiji and other South Pacific islands, kava kava continues to serve much the same purpose. By sedating the body but keeping the mind alert, the milky brew helps insure a peaceful resolution to disputes brought about through conversation rather than fisticuffs. (Perhaps other world leaders should take a swig...)

In addition to the tale of Aladdin in the magic garden and the famed Cedars of Lebanon (as featured on the

Lebanese flag), the Middle East provides at least one other prominent account of humans communicating with plants: Moses talking to a burning bush. Even today, or rather especially today, the notion is still considered appealing to many residents of the region as evidenced by the growing number of press photos featuring folks crowded around a blazing effigy of George the Decider. Although the message comes across loud and clear, perhaps this contemporary twist on the burning bush doesn't quite qualify as a sincere attempt at human/plant communication. Yet, there have been other modern efforts to learn from our leafy friends.

In 1966, Cleve Backster, a former interrogator for the CIA and a leading authority on lie detection, conducted experiments in plant ESP, using polygraph (lie detectors) techniques. His experiments supported the idea that plants are sensitive to human thought. These conclusions, linked with growing interest in cybernetics, and well-established evidence regarding plant sensitivity to environmental changes, spurred additional research interests. In 1970, defense engineer L. George Lawrence remarked, “...a few stunning discoveries of excellent promise [have] prompted those most active in this field to predict that, in time, parapsychological methods might well rival the orthodox communications arts and sciences currently in use.” (Electronics World, April, 1970).

It appears that Mr. George has yet to be proven wrong. Thirty-eight years later, the U.S. Department of Defense has taken great interest in plant communication. Specifically, DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), the DoD's budget-gobbling R&D branch,

*continued on pg. 18*



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# 21 RECENTLY DISCOVERED DELIGHTS

By Elisa Ambrogio



**A Tragic Honesty: The Life and Work of Richard Yates** by Blake Bailey (Picador, 2008)

The Bailey came out this past year or so, but I would recommend first reading Yates' easiest-to-find novel, *Revolutionary Road*, before it goes out of print again. Eros, pathos, flop sweat, it's all there; a man outside and inside his own time. Highs and lows as a writer, but at his best it does not get better; more of a grown man than Salinger and less of a prick than Updike: the comic and horrible desperation of the 1950s middle class white guy. I can't get enough! The biography is filled with his drinking, mother, teaching, TB, women, self-defeat, madness, work, beard-growing and sadness.

**Alex Nielson & Richard Youngs *Electric Lotus* LP** (vhf, 2004)

Two guys make glue-sniffing rock and roll cast in the crucible of the entire recorded history of time and act really nonchalant about it.

**Giant Skyflower Band show at the Hemlock**

Closing out the show under swirling lights, Jason stumped out deep crazy timpani, Glenn sawed away at melodies and chords like an old-timey German cobbler channeling Dave Kusworth and Shayde "Mushmouth" Sartin slunk out basslines like a somnambulant Greg Lake. It was a night to remember. They've got a CD on Soft Abuse called *Blood of the Sunworm*, and name notwithstanding, it is effen rad.

**Evolution of a Cromagnon** by John Joseph (Punk House, 2007)

Finally. But don't take my word for it. Adam Yauch has this to say: "So if you want to remember what NYC was like in the '70s and '80s, if you are interested in selling fake acid at Madison Square Garden, or dressing up like Santa Claus in a wheelchair to hustle money for the Hari Krishnas... put a read on this." Also available in audio book form, AH! Now,

Donovan Quinn



anyone who is anyone knows that this year John Bloodclot is also coming out with his own nutrition and fitness guide. Here is what he had to say in his press release: "I'm sick of people, who are either ignorant of the facts, or even worse, have hidden agendas, dissing vegetarians because we care about animals and the environment. What, do you want to live in a barren wasteland, dick wad?" Amen.

**Joshua Burkett *Where's My Hat* (Time-Lag, 2008)**

The album long awaited by those who played holes into Gold Cosmos so many years ago is finally here. Joshua Burkett is known for co-owning Mystery Train—the best record store in Western Massachusetts—and for being a bit of a mystery train himself. Though a master musical craftsman, he rarely plays live and takes years to release records. Where's My Hat starts with a bold electric bagpipe somewhere between an emergency siren and a diseased fog. Josh's guitar braids mental rugs and smooths down the rough edges. Though I think of Simon Finn at his gentlest, or Pip Proud or Skip Spence, it is not like anything else. And if you think it is you are wrong. There are efforts that wish they were this but they are not. You can hear the difference. Attempts at peace and a knowing ill-ease permeate the record, but it is above all a work of intricate idiosyncratic beauty.

**Americatown**

Using the law to strip citizens of their human rights is the first step Hitler took after growing that dippy moustache, so maybe check out the Center for Constitutional Rights and spoonfeed yourself some spit-take facts. <http://www.ccrjustice.org>

**Spectre Folk *The Blackest Medicine* (Woodsist, 2008)**

Here drum-dilweed extraordinaire Pete Nolan takes on new dimensions of low fidelity radness through the Woodsist imprint, the infamous label in charge of releasing other super-jammers such as Axolotl, Loosers and Blues Control. So many good songs, I don't know where to start; it's like Gene Clark in a manhole with Von LMO in Bushwick. This is another artist criminally unappreciated for his solo work, most probably due to his surly manner. Just cause the man don't hold doors for people doesn't mean he doesn't know how to build castle bridges of strangeness into the void. LISTEN.

**Twenty-eight Artists and Two Saints: Essays** by Joan Acocella (Vintage, 2007)

Since she works the dance circuit for *The New Yorker*, this is a little heavy on the choreographer/ballet dancers for my plebian tastes, but has been one of the books I come back to again and again. As a warning, despite her beautiful prose, do not look up Bob Fosse clips on youtube. You will probably not be as moved by the musical *Damn Yankees* in this cultural context as Acocella was, and you will feel funny if anyone sees you. This compilation of biographical



essays that all focus on what makes people get work accomplished as artists is stellar, with essays about Italo Svevo, Penelope Fitzgerald and Stefan Zweig.

**Viz U.S.A.**

VizUSA is the new psychedelic simple, hard: the rock and roll of Buddy Holly bare bones with the doors of perception jimmyin' and repetitious riff milkin' of Les Rallizes Denudes. The first time I came into contact with these dudes, Caitlin was wearing tight neon pink spandex pants and a white furry coat; she was surrounded by a bunch of scuzz-duh dudes in Paris, talking real French to French folks. Calder looked like he just dropped out of Alice in Chains and had his hair in a big momma hippie braid down his back. They were the nicest people I talked to all tour. They were playing with Excepter then; most recently I saw them with Richard and John from Sightings with Blues Control in New York, which was an amazing show. Look for the epic full length out on NNBB imprint The Serth, ASAP.

**Donovan Quinn**

Though best known for his work with the Skygreen Leopards, Quinn has been culling his private weird recordings since he lived in a rotting trailer in the suburban sprawl of Walnut Creek, California. Due to popular insistence, the man has finally gone solo. Quinn is a Marlboro man mystic channeled through Francois Hardy just woken from a nap: frowsy, surrurant and surly. He curls out chords like Duane Eddy on ludes, strumming on some ether plane of American guitar groupmind. It warms my heart that perhaps people will hear Donovan and be able to discern a true contender from the hollow trees out there. Spring finds old Donovan releasing a 45 with regional hits "Sister Alchemy" and "Rabbit Tracks," to be followed by the full length LP on Soft Abuse. I might as well mention two other criminally under-jammed records, which are the *Jehovah Surrender* EP by the Skygreen Leopards and the self-titled *Flying Canyon* LP, respectively found on Jagjaguar and Soft Abuse.

**Kill All Your Darlings: Pieces, 1990-2005** by Luc Sante (Yeti/Verse Chorus Press)

Using New York City as shorthand for America, Sante writes in a dry, elegiac prose style and lived in Alphabet City when it was scary. He captures a very specific time in New York and bridges this with more current essays on Giuliani, 9/11 etc. Sometimes he can sound a little arch, like when he's talking about the low 'genius' quotient among the Nuggets garage rockers, but his essay on the plastic injection mold alone is worth the price of the book. "There remained the lingering aura of the Wobblies, of the miners' strikes and auto workers' strikes of the 1930s, as well as a cascade of images from the Paris Commune and the October Revolution and the Long March. We imagined basking in the radiance of that aura when we wore our blue chambray shirts and listened to the MC5, not suspecting that within a decade or two most of Americans would be exported or terminated. Then the remnants of the working class would either be handed neckties and told they were middle-class, or forced into fast-food uniforms and told they didn't exist."

**The artwork of Mick Turner**

Despite being prolific and beautiful enough in his work as a solo musician and with such rad dudes as Venom P. Stinger and the Dirty Three, Mick Turner has got the nerve to paint perfect pictures. Walking through a thick bright landscape of women, kangaroos, the sea, alligators, fences and open sky, Mick paints like the best dreams: lucid, precise in emotion, and juxtaposing disparate images and ideas into perfect sense. Paintings like his were already there, but no one ever bothered to get them down on canvas.

**Colossal Yes**

Colossal Yes/Jack Rose at 21 Grand, Colossal Yes at the Make Out Room, Colossal Yes at the Rite Spot before Christmas. Drinking something kind of like alcoholic coffee lotion, Utrillo played the piano with his back to the audience and his radness on full display. Like Goffin/King if it was just one dude in a Hawaiian shirt, his songs are beautiful narratives, melodically perfect and lyrical bitches. Never obvious, he hides his brutal snapshots of human nature and ideals under rubrics of sweet piano in the greatest tradition of American songwriting. He makes me wish my ears heard better, because every time I listen, I find something new. At the Rite Spot show, Utrillo, Adam, Charlie and Ben played acoustic jams and brought down the house, then a spontaneous conga line broke out. I think *Acapulco Roughs* was one of the most underated albums of 2006, but luckily, Kushner has another album in the works as we speak that kicks its ass. Slog your way through the Beirut promos on the Ba Da Bing site to see when it comes out.

**Mick Barr (Ocrilim)**

This guy is a mindblowing guitar player, and yet he infuses all of his technical, joint destroying dexterity with some kind of heavy spirit and meaning. I guess they call it phrasing, but I think it might be mojo, which Barr has got in spades. The first seven-inch record I ever bought was by a Connecticut band called Thinner, which, it turns out, Mick used to play in. Not only is this guy an axe-master, but he was really nice to me when I was 16 talking at length about the lyrics to "New York Crew."

**Coffee Plant Demos**

Cam Archer sent this my way, and I have been listening to it. Skip Cathouse Blues, the song about the Goldfish and Garbo. The rest: PURE gold. Especially hearing Lindsey



Flying Canyon

Buckingham's twerpy self-introduction at the start of a set—"And now! Buckingham Nicks!"

**Tony Rettman's Detroit Hardcore article in *Swindle* No. 12**

Finally. Dedicated to Larissa Strickland, Tony talks first person to the people who you idolize: This from Steve Miller of The Fix on the D.C. scene and straightedge: "[A]ll those kids in those hardcore bands were throwing out their Aerosmith and AC/DC records. It all seemed fishy to me." This, Barry Hensler, Ian Mackaye, Dave Stimpson, Tesco Vee, and John Brannon chatting like they're at a sleepover. Tony's gift as a writer is not what he knows, which borders on the obsessive, but his ear for the language and music he loves, and his gift for capturing rhetorical pratfalls. This is his head and his heart. The best music writing in a periodical since before I was born. Now will someone please pay him to write about Abba and/or Roger Nichols?

**Jason Wambsgans' "Seagulls Attack!" piece for the *Chicago Tribune***

Jason is a photojournalist for the Tribune and the sounds and the photos of suburban Illinois here are Jason's, as is the sense of mystery and narrative in the photos. This series deals with that every-17-year-blight, cicadas, the bugs that Basho slung into epic haiku history: "soon to die/yet no sign of it:/a cicada's cry." Here in these black and white photos the bugs are set in opposition and parallel to the busy residents of a carefully tended Illinois suburb, overwhelmed by the sudden force of nature disturbing their controlled environment. The world of glossy geometric lawns and two-car garages he captures is vulnerable and temporary, both the humans and the bugs, soon to die yet no sign of it. He combines empathy with his subjects with a sense of human absurdity that he is complicit in. I encourage you to write him and demand a showing of his back catalogue.

**Joe Carducci**

Reading *Rock and the Pop Narcotic* kinda changed my brain, and I even saw where he was coming from on Springsteen. This year Mike Wolf gave me his copy of *Enter Naomi: SST, L.A.* and *All That*. Carducci on the bands Naomi shot: "When the German or Japanese reissues, or the wireless ring-tone file-sharing eco-system, or the film documentaries, or Archaeology itself allows their rediscovery by some future kid dropping out of their over-produced, over-sold



John Joseph

pop hell, they will find this music as clean and pure as field recordings. It's the last music recorded in our world before noise-gates and digital delay replaced space and air with a virtual reality that promised a lie better than truth." Fucking A. Carducci writes like a fan dances, and it can be maddening what he leaves out or obscures, but what he puts in lifts from the page to become bass relief illustrations in your mind to explain much bigger and more complex things. Reading about SST always reminds me of how important work and discipline is, and reminds me to pony up and stop being a pussy. "Get it happening, this ain't Van Halen!" Just don't think about the money, lawyer, life-long feuds, stuff that happened later. As a companion to the times from an entirely other mind, I recommend *Saint Joe* by Joe Cole.

**Falk, California**

Up north near Eureka, California, there is a redwood forest that used to be a logging town and mill. Covered in new trees and old stumps, there is a trail that gets wilder the deeper you get into the woods and will take you all the way to Fortuna. You can walk inside a stump of a redwood that a logger used to live in, and there are a couple of signs that there were humans there once but mostly it is a forest. Awesome to know how quickly elaborate mechanations of humans can be totally invisible to the naked eye in only a few generations.

**Mick Flower**

The house Mick renovated in Leeds is clean, filled with light and stellar, like his dopest jams but less psych. Seeing Mick play live is insane. He is so precise and attentive to detail but then flies into other time and space and in his precision gets buck-ass-wild. Solo, with the Vibracathedral Orchestra and in all incarnations Mick taps into a genetic memory of sound. With Chris Corsano this year, Textile Records released The Radiant Mirror, one of the best records of, 2007, and I will bet 2008 too. I hope one day shitty Customs lets him back into the U.S.

**Playing with Six Organs of Admittance in Europe**

Besides getting to play music with Ben, and making fun of the way Fitz talked, this tour was also awesome because it included running into Spencer Clarke wearing a lei in Den Haag and having dinner at Helbaard, seeing wet naked Finnish people running from the cops, jamming in a Swedish cave, and sleeping under a cafeteria table on an overnight ferry.

**Some stellar books to check out:** *Ordeal by Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party* by George Stewart; *Skeletons of the Zahara* by Dean King; *The New Science* by Giambattista Vico; *The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels; *Anarchy and Alchemy: The Films of Alejandro Jodorowsky* by Ben Cobb. 🍷



# MELLOW YELLOWS



I first tasted dandelion wine when I bought a bottle of it at a folksy gift shop in the Amana Colonies (yes, Amana of the appliance fame). The Amana Colonies is an Amish community dating back to 1854. It was settled by the communally living German pietists then known as: The Community of True Inspiration or The Ebenezer Society. Their tenets included avoiding military service and refusal to take an oath. The Amanas are nestled in the middle of what is now a sea of genetically modified corn and soybeans known as the Midwest, more specifically Iowa.

I had wanted something to drink at my campsite that evening. When I opened the bottle, I anticipated something more magic than what met my tongue. It was cloying yellow syrupy stuff, which resembled soft drink concentrate. I poured it out next to my tent, returning it to the earth where she could compost it. I was sure that I'd never get close to it again.

That was fifteen years ago, and now I have been drinking dandelion wine for about two years. The new stuff is stuff I've made myself from dandelion blossoms gathered in Chicago. I'm happy to say that it is divine. I am sure now that the colonists actually keep the good stuff in their private cabinets.

Upon mentioning "dandelion wine", Ray Bradbury usually comes to mind. However, after I heard a radio

When you notice lawns and parks spotting yellow, it's time to gather. The general rule of thumb is to collect one gallon of flowers for each gallon of wine you want to make.

interview with him a few years back when he passionately made a case to colonize the moon so we can ditch this trashed planet and survive as a race, I got confused. Enough said.

So the point is, I am going to tell you how to make dandelion wine. I encourage you to do this because dandelions pop up everywhere and every place. They are nearly ubiquitous pioneers in our landscapes of disturbed and deprived soils. Consumed, they are a magnificent digestive, aiding the heath and cleansing of the kidneys and liver. Amongst vitamins A, B, C and D, they have a huge amount of potassium.

As a beyond-perfect diuretic, dandelion has so much potassium that when you digest the plant, no matter how much fluid you lose, your body actually experiences a net gain of the nutrient. In other words, folks – dandelion wine is one alcohol that actually helps your liver and kidneys! Generous, sweet, overlooked dandelion...

When you notice lawns and parks spotting yellow, it's time to gather. The general rule of thumb is to collect one gallon of flowers for each gallon of wine you want to make.



Illustration by Aiyana Udesen

Enjoy your wandering. People will think you quaintly eccentric for foraging blossoms on your hands and knees. Note: collect blossoms (without the stem) that have just opened and are out of the path of insecticides and pesticides.

So here's how I make dandelion wine...

I pour one gallon boiling water over one gallon dandelion flowers in a large bowl. When the blossoms rise (wait about twenty-four to forty-eight hours), I strain the yellow liquid out, squeezing the remaining liquid out of the flowers, into a larger ceramic or glass bowl. I compost the spent flowers (thanks dandelion!).

Then I add juice and zest from four lemons and four oranges, and four pounds of sugar (4-4 = E.Z.). Okay, now what I think is the best part - I float a piece of stale bread in the mixture sprinkled with bread yeast. This technique is used in Appalachian and some European recipes.

Then I toss a dishtowel over it so the mixture can both breathe and the crud floating around my house stays out. I continue stirring the wine several times a day until it stops fermenting. This takes about two weeks or so.

When I am certain it has stopped "working", I strain, bottle and cork it up and bid it farewell until months later. In fact I wait until the winter solstice, when I can revisit that sunny spring day by drinking it in.

Transition: as such an effective diuretic, dandelion is also know in French as "pis-en-lit" or "pee-in-the-bed". Which brings me to YELLOW LIQUID #2 ... that's right, pee!

Pee is 95% water and 5% salts and minerals. When it comes out of the body, it's sterile. Admittedly, I haven't drunk my first whizz as part of my yogic practice, however, I habitually save my pee to potentize my compost as well as for making a nitrogen-rich fertilizer for my

plants. Our bodies are nutrient factories – let's value our post-consumption products and offer them back to the Mother.

Us humans pee on average a bit more than a quart a day, at a dilution rate of 1:5 (the recipe). Each one of us are producing more than two gallons of free plant fertilizer a day. Or around 750 gallons a year - which is enough fertilizer to grow 75% of an individual's food needs for that year.

Did you know that most of the algae blooms - whether in the Los Angeles river, the shore of the Great Lakes, the mouth of the Mississippi and many other waterways - are largely due to agricultural run-off of nitrogen fertilizers applied to our corn-fed nation's farmlands?

Peeing directly into your compost pile is great. So is collecting it in a jar or a bucket and dumping it into the pile later. Not composting? Then just dilute it fresh (remember the recipe again, 1:5) with some water and use it directly on plants or let it oxidize and turn into a nitrate (i.e. leaving it out until it gets nice and dark) and then apply it undiluted. Not only is this something that has been done for ages around the world, it is still being done. Most people are just hush hush about it.

Why are our municipalities cleaning water so we can flush our toilets with it? The separation of the solid and liquid body waste is an extensive and costly process for the water treatment plant and we pay that cost twice by flushing it all away. We have urine blindness...

Before I sign off, I want to put a bug in your ear – this terrific yellow liquid that our own bodies produce can also produce gunpowder. But maybe I'll approach that topic in other column – or maybe you'll just have to do the research yourself. 🐛

"Ten affirmations of Ayers' eccentric gifts on this very welcome comeback." **Refilling Stone**

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Following a wave of recent reissues and re-recorded versions of older CD-R titles, Desire in Uneasiness is an album of all new material from the acclaimed Canadian dreamsludge weavers Nadja. Five colossal jams of eternally-fuzzy, ethereal dirge that is powered by the interlocking bass guitars of Leah Buck, areff and Aidan Baker, setting loose a wave of monstrous grinding bass riffs amidst a fog of beautiful, swirling electronic effects. Desire also marks the first Nadja album to feature a live drummer in place of the drum machine programming that has driven the band's previous recordings. The organic drumming here takes Nadja's music into new realms of spacious jazzy exploration, dubby rhythms and cavernous psychedelia, while also delivering some of the band's most grooving, crushing hypno-bliss yet.

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 Anyone who claims to know what skateboarding is “all about” is full of shit. To define it as sport, art, science, transportation, play, culture, lifestyle, or anything else is to minimize the unlimited potential within the form. Skateboarding is inherently meaningless. Its lack of meaning is what allows it to be such a progressive and influential experience.

The origin of skateboarding cannot be localized to any single point. The skateboard was never invented; it was discovered by children across America simultaneously as apple-crate scooters of the 1940s and 50s were broken down and converted into the legendary 2x4” with roller-skate trucks. Thus, the skateboard has no intention behind it: no inventor, no purpose, no ownership, no goal, no rules. Nothing in the creation or design of the skateboard assumes any meaning or value. It is a perfectly uninhibited vehicle of action-oriented possibility.

As the skateboard was refined with technical advancements (urethane wheels, slight changes in board and truck design) and influenced by surf culture and technique, it evolved and attracted the daredevils and visionaries who crafted the form as we recognize it today. The terrain of streets and sidewalks led to ramps and pools and drain-

Finding the center in these dramatic curves, attaining balance in the midst of this tremendous spiraling movement, is as much an internal discipline as an external one.

pipes, and eventually begat massive concrete skateparks. Journalists and photographers and filmmakers developed a symbiotic relationship with the athletes, documenting the physical forms and commenting on the culture and surrounding artworks and personalities.

The masters of the form, the leaders and great events of skateboard history, the varied terrain and infrastructure: all of this has been documented and pored over by an appreciating audience. And yet, for all of the journalism and vicarious entertainment that surrounds skateboarding, there’s never really been a deeper examination of the form— specifically the subtle internal and energetic processes—of skateboarding itself.

The technique of actually riding on a skateboard is not that different than standing still. The skateboard is a vehicle, with wheels and axles and a platform to stand upon, but there is no drivetrain. A skateboard moves by the kinetic energy of being pushed, or by taking advantage of its potential energy positioned at the top of a hill or transitional wall. Once the skateboard is up to speed, the majority of the techniques start and end with simply riding along—standing still on the platform of the skateboard, while the world rolls beneath one’s feet, occasionally in excess of 40 miles an hour. In this standing position, the skateboard and rider may cover larger distances, they



illustration by Joseph Remnant

may roll up and down steep inclines, they may ride up circular transitions above and beyond the vertical axis, they may launch into the air and cover great distances through empty space before returning to solid ground. The skateboarder, more than anything, must shift his or her weight and stance to accommodate these changes in trajectory. The technical aspects of contemporary trick performance include a lot of board flipping and body spinning and sideways sliding and shifting and grinding, but the foundation of riding a skateboard in a casual, two-footed stance remains.

The standing skateboarder experiences dramatic changes in acceleration and frame of reference. Dropping into a ramp or bowl sets the rider off on a path of varying degrees of linear and radial acceleration. Physics students are aware that radial acceleration—the way a skateboarder will circumnavigate a bowl’d transition, or a planet will orbit a star— results in acceleration towards the center of the curve. This curious feature of Newtonian physics segues neatly into Einstein’s theory of relativity, involving acceleration along the curvature of space-time. Einstein postulated a geometric interpretation of the “force” of gravity, and this revelation completely changed the way we view and understand our world.

This means that the skateboarder, in his ongoing dance

with gravity and acceleration, can use the fine instrument of the central nervous system to examine the most dramatic and fundamental forces in the universe. This movement affects physiological change, in the form of blood flow and oxygenation and chemical release and so on, but also affects awareness and psychological change. Finding the center in these dramatic curves, attaining balance in the midst of this tremendous spiraling movement, is as much an internal discipline as an external one.

Over the past ten years I have considered skateboarding in the light of two disciplines which are often grouped together as “mind-body” practices, Taiji (also Taijiquan, T'ai Chi) and Yoga (specifically Hatha Yoga). While the comparisons have been made before, a deeper investigation is overdue. Taiji and Yoga are physical practices with corresponding philosophies that have endured for literally thousands of years, drawing from the sophisticated and profoundly spiritual cultures that spawned them: Taiji evolved with Chinese Taoism, and Yoga evolved with Indian Hinduism and Buddhism. A greatly simplified explanation of their intention is to prepare the human participant for the discipline of deep meditation.

Taiji and Yoga use the body-mind correlation to enhance and actualize the understanding and expression of spiritual connectedness. In Yoga, the intention is to “yoke” or unite with the divine through mental refinement and physical alignment in the flow of universal energy. The intention of Taiji is to follow the way—the Tao—by “uniting heaven and earth”, balancing the opposing forces of the universe internally and externally. The famous “yin yang” symbol is actually called the Taiji—it means supreme ultimate, and is intended to suggest that the universe in its true state is in perfect balance.

Considering skateboarding as a mind-body activity and relating it to Yoga and Taiji can allow insight into the less than obvious internal processes at work. It is not sheer athleticism—strength, endurance, etc.—that make a good skateboarder; a good skateboarder must be a master of balance, focus, perseverance, creative ingenuity, and fear management. It takes heart and vision (and a good sense of humor) to ride a skateboard, not muscle. Cultivation of the heart and vision are among the primary intentions of a traditional mind-body activity, and they do not involve a painstaking enhancement of the ego, but quite the opposite. Skateboarders have as much to learn about the physical aspects of their craft from these ancient disciplines as they do about the internal, mental, and spiritual aspects.

Regardless of whether these systems are studied or adopted by skateboarders, the point is that there is an opening here for some higher purpose. When you are skateboarding, any goals or obligations are self-created. The intention of your skateboard practice is up to you. For someone who has been skating for 20 or 30 years, the reasons for skateboarding have probably changed greatly. What begins as sport, art, play, a job, etc. can become an opportunity to merge a physically balanced form with open-minded spiritual potential. This can take place by studying Yoga or Taiji, or by incorporating another religious philosophy (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zen Buddhism, and so on) into the mix. It is certainly not necessary, but the choice is yours.

Whatever you choose, you will not be alone on your path. In 50 years skateboarding has developed into a worldwide culture with millions of participants, growing and evolving at the speed of life, and every flavor 🍷

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Applied Magic(k) cont’d

has sought to enlist plants in the so-called “War on Terror.” Their Biological Input/Output Systems (BIOS) Program attempts to create “sentinel plants”. When the plants are in the presence of certain triggers—chemicals released by explosives, for instance—they will supposedly offer a bioengineered response such as glowing/fluorescing, or ceasing the production of chlorophyll. Articles on the subject report that de-chlorophyllized plants over a broad geographic area would show up in satellite imagery as a once-green landscape now turned brown or even white.

The plants themselves haven’t yet stated how they feel about the whole affair, and the silence that we received from the animals we attempted to question can hardly be interpreted as enthusiastic support for the project. However, we did manage to get a few brief responses from some of the scientists who have received government funding for the aforementioned research. Although they weren’t exactly willing to provide details (or go on record), they strongly hinted that the program was a flop and has since been shut down.

But flop or not, we find ourselves faced with a situation that is both shadowed and illuminated. On the one leaf, the uber-technologized war machine has added to its slash-and-burn arsenal an environmental attitude that seeks to create a bio-engineered and fully militarized version of nature. On the other leaf, the interrogation of plants has somehow managed to bring us closer to our roots and to an acknowledgement that the nature of consciousness and the consciousness of nature is more magical than we might ordinarily suspect. Even though it currently seems difficult to maintain clear lines of communication within our own species, perhaps the notion of psychobotany can help to radically rearrange the way we think about communication in the first place. It may complicate matters for vegetarians, but expanding our capacity to communicate with other life-forms could plant the seed for a whole new breed of ecological alliance. 🍄

The Analog Life cont’d

anyone?) and demand up to two \$40 coupons for digital-to-analog converter boxes to extend the life of your tube. OF course, the government stands to earn much more from auctioning off the spectrum, and their pals will do quite well selling the converters, so don’t feel like we’ve gone socialist or anything.

For the rest of us, broadcasters are promising a new magical world of digital television, because, after all, digital is “better.” Because my Samsung picks up both NTSC and digital signals, I can tell you that the quality of a strong digital transmission is definitely richer. But as usual, digital is not a standard but a sword that can be wield-

ed with widely varying degrees of finesse. In order to make more money, broadcasters can choose to compress their digital channels in order to pack more services into the available bandwidth—including, possibly, other stations that would be sent over the same digital channel. The more you compress, the more lame artifacts are destined to spooge up your screen. If you already use the Internet to liberate movies and TV shows from the evil grip of copyright holders, you will know what I mean: the splotchy walls, the stuttered time-slips, the eruptions of Cubist ectoplasm.

The spiritual difference between digital and analog, it seems, is clearest where the signal decays. A weak analog signal is often bathed in snow, and its fuzzy “ghosts” can not only be tolerable and even charming, but can still be reasonably enjoyed way out in the boonies. Millions of earthlings have had ecstatic TV experiences watching World Cup matches on 13 inch TVs with crap reception. The relative smoothness of analog noise makes it simply easier for the mechanism to receive signals and for our eyes to make sense out of faces in the clouds. Ghosts like it, because ghosts like organic things. Digital signals, on the other hand, decay with neither grace nor charm. Instead, as the signal weakens, it swiftly passes over what is known as the “digital cliff”: a sharp, jarring plunge into jagged visual noise followed by zippo.

Cathode ray tubes are strange devices: evacuated glass teardrops outfitted with what amounts to a ray gun, blasting electrons at an array of glowing phosphors that, in color TVs anyway, look like psychedelic Op-Art. Sending phantasms invisibly through the air to dance across the surface of these crystal balls has always been a somewhat necromantic act. But if we are going to talk of analog ghosts, we need to talk of analog corpses: the millions of old school TVs that are now being sacrificed to the landfill lords of forced obsolescence. Plenty of people will get their hands on converters, of course, but plenty more will just toss out their CRTs and dive, like me, ever deeper into the digital wave. The guy who runs Electronic Recyclers, one of the largest e-waste recyclers in America, thinks that roughly 80 million analog sets will get tossed out over the next year or two. According to a back-of-the-envelope calculation, that’s just under a million and a half tons of TV—a mass that surpasses the weight of the Twin Towers. And that’s not to mention the amount of lead oxide in the glass. Let’s just say I hope outfits like Electronic Recycler are ready to get their hands dirty.

I just left my Sanyo on the street one night and it was gone by morning. In San Francisco, the street still giveth and taketh away. But a relic of the boob tube remains. Because we don’t have cable, we still need to use an antenna to pick up the terrestrial digital broadcast signals. So there sits my home theater: a sleek, if modestly-sized Samsung LNT2653H, looking like the monolith from 2001 laid on

its side, topped by a pair of bent aluminum rabbit ears, duct-taped to the back of the set, flashing its peace sign at the principalities of the air. 🍄

Advanced Standing cont’d

of humanity and human achievement is accounted for. This progressive, diverse living community is more available to spiritual development than perhaps any other group of people in the history of the world. In America, where freedom of such pursuit is a constitutional right, we have a unique opportunity to follow our own path and uncover personal insight into the deepest workings of the universe, a balanced experience that might as well take place while standing on a wooden plank with trucks and urethane wheels.

I don’t want to try and define skateboarding, nor do I want to attach any extra importance to it. Its meaninglessness is its ultimate value, and any rewards are up to the individual to discern. That said, the internal processes of skateboarding are available for anyone at any level to explore—but to do so you will have to see beyond the obvious, and you are well-advised to take a cue from some ancient wisdom. Skateboarding goes deep, and it can be about a lot more than fame or success or being cool; it can quickly transcend any imaginary differences between human souls. Skateboarding is a real, life-



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# HERETICS UNITE!

Peter Lamborn Wilson on GREEN HERMETICISM

IN September 2003 a small conference on “Sacred Theory of Earth” was held in New Paltz, New York, where the idea of Green Hermeticism arose out of discussions amongst hermeticists, poets, Christians, Buddhists, neo-pagans, Sufis and assorted heretics. At this meeting, the obscure and little-read text Novices of Sais by the German Romantic poet was presented as a virtual manifesto of Green Hermeticism, which might be defined as a spagyric approach to the environmental sciences (and to their “crisis”), an approach both empirical and magical.

Here’s what that means:

The god Hermes began life as a heap of stones marking the boundary of some Neolithic Greek farm field. He still incarnates (as Mercury) on dimes and pencils, and his Caduceus (two snakes in double helix coiled round a staff) has been misappropriated by the AMA.

As god of communication and silence, commerce and burglary (his first feat as a newborn babe is to rustle the cattle of Apollo), Hermes naturally becomes the patron of secret and dangerous arts such as writing. Thus he’s identified with the Mesopotamian Nebo and the Egyptian Thoth, Ibis-headed baboon scribe of the gods, and eventually grows into Hermes Trismegistus (“Thrice-Great”), patron of alchemy, magic and the hermetic arts.

Worshipped from Celtic Gaul (as Lugh, inventor of all arts) to India (as Buddha, Wisdom, the planet Mercury), Hermes becomes the focus of a cult in Ptolemaic Alexandria that produced the Greek Corpus Hermeticum, a synthesis of ancient Egyptian and Indo-European wisdom traditions. Alchemy (the art of Khem, Egypt) takes on its classical form around the same time (say, 200 BC to 200 AD).

Hermeticism passed from its cradle-land onward in time and space to Judaism, Christianity and eventually Islam, as well as Hinduism and even Taoism. Since it’s neither a religion nor a science in the narrow sense, but an Art, it can be reconciled with any religion—or with all religions. Modern science can be seen as the theft of its secrets by such keen but closeted alchemists as Isaac Newton.

If modern science’s origins lie in Hermeticism then post-modern science now begins to sound like alchemy again, with its cyclotronic transmutation, mystical quantum leaps and chaotic attractors. Hermeticism seems relevant also in the ecological and environmental sciences—

because Hermeticism has always been “green.”

“As Above, So Below,” the Hermetic doctrine of correspondence between micro- and macrocosm, derives from The Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, a Greco-Egyptian text preserved only in Arabic.



The Emerald Tablet

Emerald green is the heraldic color of Prophetic Islam. In Sufi alchemy the “highest” color, that of the Philosopher’s Stone, is gold-green. The Hidden Prophet Khezr is the Green man of Sufism, an immortal adept of vegetation and the water of life. Wherever he walks, flowers and herbs spring up in his footsteps, and he patronizes the hermetic arts.

The eighth century Iraqi Shiite (or possibly Manichaeen) alchemist Jabir Ibn Hayyan (called Geber in the West) first developed the famous dyadic principles of Sulphur and Mercury. This occidental yang/yin symbolism spread as far as China and lies at the heart of alchemy’s worldview.

The great 16<sup>th</sup>-century Swiss alchemist-physician Paracelsus inherited the Sulphur/Mercury concept but realized that it required completion by a third term: Salt. Sulphur is soul, Mercury is spirit, and Salt is body. In one sense, this constitutes a Trinitarian solution to the problem of dualism. In another sense it represents a discovery of the dialectic. (The mystic Jacob

Boehme picks this up from Paracelsus and passes it on to later German philosophers, eventually to Hegel and Marx—minus all magic.)

Paracelsus also shifts the focus of alchemy from transmutation of metals to the art of healing. Both plants and metals are used in this new medical alchemy, which

**NOW** that Marxism has crumbled, one victor holds the field: Enlightenment Rationalism’s greatest victory: the Free Market as inexorable law of nature. The only possible dialectical negation of this thesis, I think, must come from the long-abandoned and even repressed Hermetic Left, and from Romantic Science, and from spirituality. Green Hermeticism.

Green Hermeticism can be the basis for our approach to the coming revelation, the coherent spiritual movement that constitutes the only imaginable alternative to unending degradation of Earth and humanity. Hermeticism has no need of authoritarian cults, but also no need to reject the traditional authentic on ideological or dogmatic grounds. It can be practiced alone, in groups, or congregations—openly or in secret—as part of any religion or outside them all—without violating its traditional integrity. It can be practiced without formal training, but not without direct experience.

The ideal social group for Green Hermeticism now, perhaps, might be the “think tank”—the equivalent of the Dark Age monastery. We can think of “tank” in the Hindustani sense of a cool shady pool of water with stone steps on all four sides, a few water lilies and lotuses, not as a military tank, or an aquarium or a gas tank. No doubt traditionalists would prefer a term such as “Invisible College.” The whole point this time would be to keep it from turning into yet another Royal Society, selling out to the ruling paradigm. Funding must come from outside Capital—but outside Capital there is no funding. Catch 23.

The semi- or roughly secret society, think tank or Invisible College we hypothesize would have to concern itself with the entirety of Romantic Science and Green Hermeticism. But where consciousness itself (or “sweet love”) is deemed a crime, the College must be prepared to think like a nest of heresy. “Heretics Unite!,” as Henry Corbin used to say. (Actually, anarcho-federation might be better.) Anyway, there’s nothing to lose but chains of false consciousness—and everything to gain: the Sacred Earth.

*Excerpted from “Green Hermeticism,” as published in Green Hermeticism: Alchemy and Ecology (Lindisfarne, 2007). [www.lindisfarne.org](http://www.lindisfarne.org)*

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# ENDARKENMENT MANIFESTO

PETER LAMBORN WILSON'S HALF-SERIOUS PROPOSAL FOR A POLITICAL MOVEMENT TO UPHOLD AND PROPAGATE THE IDEALS OF GREEN HERMETICISM



At least half the year belongs to Endarkenment. Enlightenment is only a special case of Endarkenment—and it has nights of its own.

During the day democracy waxes, indiscreminately illuminating all and sundry. But shadowless noon belongs to Pan. And night imposes a “radical aristocracy” in which things shine solely by their own luminescence, or not at all.

Obfuscatory, reactionary and superstitious, Endarkenment offers jobs for trolls and sylphs, witches and warlocks. Perhaps only superstition can re-enchant Nature. People who fear and desire nymphs and fauns will think twice before polluting streams or clear-cutting forests.

Electricity banished shadows—but shadows are “shades,” souls, the souls of light itself. Even divine light, when it loses its organic and secret darkness, becomes a form of pollution. In prison cells electric lights are never doused; light becomes oppression and source of disease.

Superstitutions may be untrue but based on deeper truth—that earth is a living being. Science may be true, i.e. effective, while based on a deeper untruth—that matter is dead.

The peasants attacking Dr. Frankenstein’s tower with their torches and scythes were the shock troops of Endarkenment, our luddite militia. The original his-

torical Luddites smashed mechanical looms, ancestors of the computer.

“Neolithic conservatism” (Paul Goodman’s definition of anarchism) positions itself outside the ponderous inevitability of separation and sameness. Every caveman a Prince Kropotkin, every cavewoman Mrs. Nietzsche. Our Phalanstery would be lit by candles and our Passions avowed via messenger pigeons and hot-air balloons.

Imagine what science might be like to day if the State and Kapital had never emerged. Romantic Science proposes an empiricism devoid of disastrous splits between consciousness and Nature; thus it prolongates Neolithic alchemy as if separation and alienation had never occurred: science for life not money, health not war, pleasure not efficiency, Novalis’s “poeticization of science.”

Of course technology itself is haunted—a ghost for every machine. The myth of Progress stars its own cast of ghouls and efreet. Consciously or unconsciously (what difference would it make?) we all know we live in techno-dystopia, but we accept it with the deterministic fatalism of beaten serfs, as if it were virtual Natural Law.

Technology mimics and thus belittles the miracles of magic. Rationalism has its own Popes and droning litanies, but the spell they cast is one of disenchantment. Or rather: all magic has migrated into money, all power into a technology of titanic totality, a violence against life that stuns and disheartens.

Hence the universal fear/desire for the End

of the World (or for some world anyway). For the poor Christian Moslem Jewish saps duped by fundamentalist nihilism the Last Day is both horrorshow and Rapture, just as for secular Yuppies global warming is a symbol of terror and meaninglessness and simultaneously a rapturous vision of post-solar-powered gemutlichkeit. Thus the technopathocracy comes equipped with its own built-in escape-valve fantasy: the Ragnarok of technology itself and the sudden catastrophic restoration of meaning. In fact Kapital can capitalize on its own huge unpopularity by commoditizing hope for its End. That’s what the smug shifts call a win/win situation.



Winter Solstice (Chaos Day in Chinese folklore) is one of Endarkenment’s official holidays, along with Samhain or Halloween, Winter’s first day.

Endarkenment stands socially for the Cro-Magnon or “Atlantean” complex—an-archist because prior to the State—for horticulture and gathering against agriculture and industry—for the right to hunt as against the usurpation of commons by lord or State. Electricity and internal combustion should be turned off along with all States and corporations and their cult of Mammon and Moloch.

Despite our ultimate aim we’re willing



to step back bit by bit. We might be willing to accept steam power or hydraulics. The last agreeable year for us was 1941. The ideal is about 10,000 BC, but we’re not purists. Endarkenment is a form of impurism, of mixture and shadow.

Endarkenment envisages a medicine advanced as it might have been if money and the State had never appeared, medicine for earth, animals and humans, based on Nature, not on promethean technology. Endarkenment is not impressed by medicine that prolongs “life span” by adding several years in a hospital bed hooked up to tubes and glued to daytime TV, all at the expense of every penny ever saved by the



Endarkenment also feels some critical admiration for Col. Qadhalfi’s Green Book, and for the Bonnot Gang (Stirnerite Nietzschean bank robbers). In Islamdom it favors “medieval accretions” like sufism and Ismailism against all crypto-modernist hyperorthodoxy and politics of resentment. We also admire the martyred Iranian Shiite/Sufi socialist Ali Shariati, who was praised by Massignon and Foucault.

Culturally Endarkenment aims at extreme neo-Romanticism and will therefore be accused of fascism by its enemies on the Left. The answer to this is that (1) we’re anarchists and federalists adamantly opposed to all authoritarian centralisms whether Left or Right. (2) We favor all races, we love both difference and solidarity, not sameness and separation. (3) We reject the myth of Progress and technology—all cultural Futurism—all plans no matter their ideological origin—all uniformity—all conformity whether to organized religion or secular rationalism with its market democracy and endless war.

Endarkenists “believe in magic” and so must wage their guerrilla through magic rather than compete with the State’s monopoly of techno-violence. Giordano Bruno’s *Image Magic* is our secret weapon. Projective hieroglyphic hermeneutics. Action at a distance through manipulation of symbols carried out

dramaturgically via acts of Poetic Terrorism, surrealist sabotage, Bakunin’s “creative destruction”—but also destructive creativity, invention of hermetico-critical objects, hieroglyphic projections of word/image “spells”—by which more is meant (always) than mere “political art”—rather a magical art with actual dire or beneficial results. Our enemies on the Right might call this political pornography and they’d be (as usual) right. Porn has a measurable physiopsychological effect. We’re looking for something like it, definitely, only bigger, and more like Artaud than Brecht—but not to be mistaken for “Absolute Art” or any other platonic purism—rather an empirical strategic “situationist” art, outside all mass media, truly underground, as befits Endarkenment, like a loosely structured “rhizomatic” Tong or freemasonic conspiracy.

The Dark has its own lights or “photisms” as Henry Corbin called them, literally as entoptic/hypnagogic phosphene-like



phenomena, and figuratively (or imaginally) as Paracelsan Nature spirits, or in Blakean terms, inner lights. Enlightenment has its shadows, Endarkenment has its illuminati; and there are no Ideas but in persons (in theologic terms, angels). According to legend the Byzantines were busy discussing “the sex of angels” while the Ottomans were besieging the walls of Constantinople. Was this the height of Endarkenment? We share that obsession.

Jan. 1, 2008



I found Ralph Bakshi's work at a crucial time in my life, maybe the perfect age. I was maybe 13, exploring underground comix, *Heavy Metal* magazine, classic rock—all the common things adolescent males used to check out, before the internet was unleashed. Around this time, my father told me about a film called *Wizards*. I don't know how it came up, maybe he saw one of my Vaughn Bode books and was reminded of it, but his description of the movie was intriguing: a dark, animated fantasy epic with violence, sex and an army from hell modeled after the Nazis. I had to see it. The year was 1986. The population was at the mercy of cable TV and whatever had been released on VHS to satisfy our movie desires. Fortunately *Wizards* existed on video and I managed to find a copy. It was moody, psychedelic and dark; it spoke to my interest in nature and

# Willfully Disturbing

Artist Arik Roper on the art and inspiration of Filmmaker Ralph Bakshi

mysticism, with some humor and voluptuous fairies thrown in. It blew me away. My drawings became more and more about this occult fantasy world, influenced by Bakshi and the others who designed the film.

*Wizards* was significant, but the real mind-warping was yet to come, and started the day I came across the video box for *Fritz the Cat*. An X-rated cartoon! I had intuited something like this must have been made by someone somewhere, and here it was. I put it back on the shelf scheming about how I could see this thing. I knew if I told my best friend Greg about *Fritz the Cat* that he'd rent it, since he didn't care what his mother thought. Then we would sit back and lose our minds as we watched anthropomorphic cartoon pornography. I told Greg, he said he'd look for it. I was vaguely aware of the R. Crumb comic it was based on, so I looked for that in the meantime.

The thing invaded my consciousness; I became so obsessed with the movie that I started to have dreams featuring the as-yet-unseen Fritz the Cat film. Finally Greg came through with the videotape and we watched the infamous flick. I was baffled and a little disturbed. Sure there was a lot of sex and drugs in there but what was with all the violence, the revolution, the racism issues? There was something nightmarish about seeing these talking animals screwing and killing each other. It was heavier, more bleak than I expected. And though it left me feeling slightly haunted, it didn't diminish my interest in all things Fritz. I drew the character on my notebooks at school; I made a clay figure of him holding

a cigarette and machine gun in my 8th grade art class; I even painted him—and my art teacher put it on display, eventually submitted it for a school art show. The gun and cigarette got it disqualified.

Naturally the next step was to find out what else this guy Ralph Bakshi had made. I checked out library books on animation, read old newspaper articles on the Microfiche to learn more about the man. I managed to discover some other movie titles: *Heavy Traffic*, *Coonskin*, *American Pop*, and a version of *Lord of the Rings*. But where was I going to find this stuff? I didn't even know if it existed on video. Every month I scoured the cable TV listings for any sign of Bakshi's films, but nothing. Then one day Greg got his hands on *Coonskin*, or "Streetfight" as it had been renamed at the time. I borrowed it, brought it home after school one day and checked it out. I had read that it was considered offensive, so I was expecting shock value, but *Coonskin* was more than shock, it was from some dark place that I hadn't visited before. It was relentlessly raw and visceral, the violence was staggering, and presented in the goriest of detail. I had some understanding of the laborious task of creating an animated film, and was amazed that anyone had put this much time and effort into making something so willfully disturbing. Where did this movie come from, who was it for? I didn't quite get it at the time. I wasn't really sure if the racism was being parodied or promoted, although the fact that no race, religion or sexual orientation was left unscathed was a clue that this was some form of harsh social satire. But there was much more to the movie than shock value. Later as I reflected and eventually read more about the film, I started to put the pieces together. *Coonskin* was basically a blaxploitation flick, and loosely modeled after Disney's super-controversial, removed-from-circulation *Song of the South*. It was a look at racism in America from the black perspective,

an urban fable full of crooked cops, hookers, mobsters, and the prison system all conspiring against the soul of America. It was very much a product of the times, saturated with that 1970s grit and melancholy that defined many films of that era.

After seeing *Coonskin*, I knew Bakshi was something of a maniac—an unpredictable and possibly psychotic artist who was liable to go into any territory with his films. Nothing was sacred or off-limits. This was why I liked him. And why I was surprised to learn in 1988 that he was directing a new series of *Mighty Mouse* cartoons for the Saturday morning slot on ABC TV. (What I didn't realize at the time was that this was full-circle for Ralph. He had started out at Terrytoons in the 1960s working on such TV cartoons as *Spider Man* and *Deputy Dawg*.) I was ready. I recorded every episode as it aired. I even got the episode where Mighty Mouse unexpectedly pulls out a crushed flower from his pocket and snorts it up, which was edited out for subsequent airings for some reason. The show lasted one season then was gone, but launched the career of its designer John Kricfalusi who redefined modern animation in the 1990s with his new project *Ren & Stimpy*.

During the next year or so I caught up on some of Bakshi's films. *Lord of the Rings* had an entirely different look and feel. It was rotoscoped—an animation technique of tracing live actors on film—which was a stark contrast to the loose cartoon design of Bakshi's previous films. Comical characters doing awful things resulted in maximum impact, but rotoscoping led to a more realistic style that was ultimately less personal and expressive. I felt something was lost in the process—the technique spoke louder than the content at times. I had the same impression of Bakshi's *American Pop* (1981) and *Fire and Ice* (1983). Though the art was elaborate, they seemed to lack the fundamental soul of the earli-

er films. Still, they were boldly sincere and imaginative efforts which expanded on new concepts in animation. I realized that even as Bakshi struggled with the changing industry through the late '70s and early '80s to realize his visions, seemingly always on the verge of quitting, he'd never run out of ideas. Here was an artist with a vision who wasn't content to compromise. Somehow he took "cartoons" and made them into "films" for adults (which includes adolescent males). He was inspiring.

Which is why it's such a pleasure to behold *Unfiltered: The Complete Ralph Bakshi*, by John M. Gibson and Chris McDonnell (Universal/Rizzoli). At long last, over 35 years after his first movie came out, somebody decided it was time for a Bakshi retrospective. It's a striking hardback volume, loaded with previously unpublished photos, illustrations and tons of precious info. We get the insane stories behind the groundbreaking films (*Wizards* was Bakshi's attempt to make a 'family film', to get back to his early interest in sci-fi fantasy and prove that he could deliver impact to a PG picture), and how most of them almost didn't happen due to production nightmares, studio underfunding and protests from offended citizens. In short, *Unfiltered* is the book I've been waiting to read since I was 13, but one I can appreciate as an adult.

Ralph Bakshi hasn't made a feature film or TV special since 1992, which is a cultural shame. But the times have changed again, and in some ways, his vintage work feels current. Art and culture have caught up to some of his ideas, and

the climate is now more welcoming to adult animation. But, at the same time, nobody in the US is using as a serious medium for storytelling. Meanwhile, computer animation has reworked the field, eliminating most traces of individuality and style. It is unlikely that Bakshi's films could be made today: they are time capsules in both content and execution. He was a pioneer, merging the cutesy world of animation with with raw realism, cutting social satire, sex, violence, drugs, music and all the other "adult" themes which had previously been kept outside the court of acceptable themes for a medium that was thought to be for children. Bakshi knew one of the great powers of animation: that the hyperbolic drawn image has the potential to express more than live action ever can. By injecting the zeitgeist's innocent image of cartoons with unflattering and dark sides of the modern era, he exploited a schism in the pop culture's mind. Underground comics started this; Bakshi took it to the screen. ■





Great new LP by Portland's **Jackie O Motherfucker** may be our fave of theirs since *Flat Fixed*. Spaced out jabber and float with casual/urgent female vocals that almost sounds like certain moments of Fuzzhead at their most blues-wailin'est, interspersed with Velvetsy *volk* moves, and overlaid with swabs of smoke & jibber. The slab is called **Valley of Fire (Textile)** and it's a monster. Also out from Jackie O is a sprawling 2 LP set, **America Mystica (Dirter Productions)**, which was recorded in various caverns by the touring version of the band between '03 and '05. Not quite as precise as *Fire*, but its muse is savagely crunchy in spots and never so formal as to appear in a bowtie. It's an open-ended weasel-breeze you'll happily sniff in the dark. Is that a hint of Genevieve's crack?

This young noise dude from Minneapolis named **Oskar Brummel** who records and performs under the name **COOKIE** has released his first entry into the new new American underground noise forest and it is frothingly balls-deep: good n' harsh. It's a cassette titled **Ambien Baby** and it flows with both a FTW sexual undertow and a strange-feeling/shit-coming rejoice. There should also be rejoicing over the fact

**Sinclair's Guitar Army.** This is one of the great American underground revolutionary texts—ecstatic, naive, visionary and powerful. It's a little funny toglom a few of the embedded old (old) school opinions about what is happening, but it's still a wonderful read, and a doorway into eternal truths, if you can stay open to its music. The new layout is pretty good. We miss a few visual aspects of the old one (like, where's the Frantic John flyer?), but the new pics more than make up for it, and the bonus CD—music, interviews, rants, poetry—is fantastic. As is **Paul Drummond's Eye Mind: The Saga of Roky Erickson**. We've read endlessly about Roky over the last 30 years, but this book is jammed (JAMMED) with new facts, reproductions of fliers, posters, photos and ephemera we never even imagined, and Drummond really covers the subject the way he deserves to be covered. It's really an overwhelming effort. The same is true of **Robert Scotto's Moondog: The Viking of 6th Avenue**. The writing can be a little *sere*, but the story is juicy enough to mitigate this dryness. We finally get to read the story of how the collaboration album with Julie Andrews came to be. There are meetings with Arturo



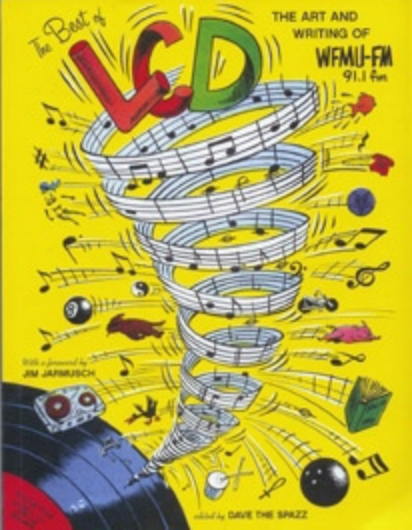
Bob Trimble

the new edition of **Hall of Fame's** 1999 album, **First Came Love, then Came the Tree (Amish)**. Originally released on CD, it's now on limited vinyl, with a swell bonus CDR of the band live. These guys were a superb trio, and went on to a lot of interesting ensembles—JOMF, MVEE's Bummer Road, etc. But their original blend was lovely, light-assed improv-volk with an experimental undercurrent that always sounded great. And how goddamn splendid it is to have this as an LP! Another gang with a long overdue LP is **Egypt Is the Magick #**, whose **The Valentine Process** was recently issued by Wooden Wand's **Mad Monk** imprint. Seems like the unit has expanded to trio size (they were but one, last time we checked), but the music remains a primitive (almost Godzian) blend of street-volk-ritualism, with some Excepter roughage tacked on for good measure. Really fine **Sara Press** cover art as well.

Interesting batch of small 'zines and booklets arrived from **Brass Tacks Press**, out L.A. way. They've got an extensive list of publications, and the few we saw are pretty whacked. **The Snake Pit** by **Baretta**, is a memoir of life in a weird derelict surfer/hippie commune/village in Lower Topanga Canyon. It's a casual read, but presents a side of the greater L.A. experience that had previously eluded us. **The Last Nowhere** is a collection of "Crap Poetry" by **Log** and **Toilet**, who also authored the bi-lingual **5 Poemes Crap**. The poetry isn't particularly good, but we're not sure it's supposed to be. What it actually reminds us of is record reviews by the great Rev. Norb in the pages of his legendary *Sick Teen* fanzine. Last up is **Voyage of the Timeship Medusa**, a comic book by **Toyllit**. *Voyage* is a very stoned-feeling post-hippie image/word blur about rabbits and cops and puke and we-know-not-all-what. Suffice to say, it's good readin'. Also extremely notable from a visual standpoint in the newest collection of drawings by **Bill Nace** (of XO4, Vampire Belt, etc.). Called simply **Drawings (Open Mouth)** it's a strange-ass collection of pen and ink illustrations, which have been so important in defining the look of the Western Massachusetts underground. Open Mouth has also just done a CD version of their classic **Daniel Higgs** cassette, **Plays the Mirror of the Apocalypse and Other Songs**. It's one of Higgs' strongest pieces of extendo string ramble (with a short jaw harp break) and should make happy ears wiggle.

The new double-12-inch by Brooklyn's **Mouthus** has no title (**No Fun**). It also has no suggested playing speed, so we tried it at 33, 45 & 78, and also played it backwards. All versions sound pretty good, although we're currently preferring 45. It's a little less underwater-sounding than it is at 33, but it maintains a certain energetic edge at that speed we find very captivating. Definitely a 33 player is **Hive Mind's Cast Through Shallow Earth LP (No Fun)**. Monolithic in a manner almost suggesting tune-fulness at times, this set slowly uncoils itself into a thick length of very krautly design. It's actually quite akin to some old school slow motion electronics of the Ohr label era. Nicely done. Also nice is **Aaron Dilloway's Chain Shot LP (Throne Heap)**. Less ambo than some of his more recent work, this one's a cluttered collage of loops and thumps on metal and/or horns. Gets very crunky towards the end. Which, you'll have to agree, is a plus.

We NEVER get promos from **QBICO** anymore (hint, hint), but we did manage to lay hands on a great new LP they released called **Early Free-Form Waveforms** by **Psychatrone Rhonedakk**. We're not sure exactly what the hell this is, but it appears to be an old electronic project that involved Brian Turner, the current program director of WFMU, which is probably the best radio station we've ever known. Brian plays very Chrome-ian guitar on one side, the flip is a pure Zolar gloop of electro-whizz. It's a formidable space jam, champ. And before we change topics, you *have* gotten the WFMU program guide anthology, right? It's called **The Best of LCD**, it's edited by Dave the



Spazz, and it's published by **Princeton Architectural Press**. The book is crammed to the nips with great writing, amazing art and cultural detritus of a remarkably diverse nature. Because Mark Newgarden's bro, David, was the program director when the 'zine started, they always had an incredible assortment of artists. The stuff here (by Panter, Burns, Clowes, Beyer, etc.) is not reprinted anywhere else. The writing's fine, too—Tosches, Linna, Marshall...a winning selection of the greats, and definitely the bathroom book of the season.



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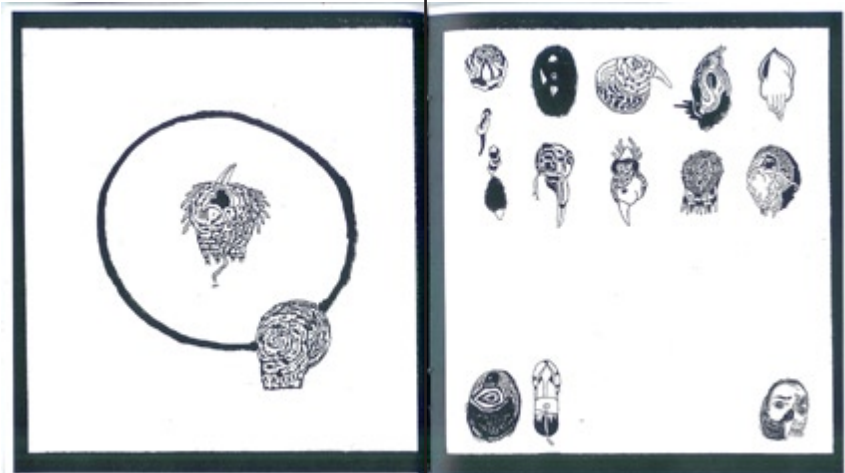
SOUTHERN LORD





It's possible this one's been out for a while, but it's such a massive effort that speediness has very little to do with it. We speak, of course, about **Ashtray Navigations' A Monument to British Rock** 3 LP set (**Smokers Gifts**). Originally released on CDR, this vinylization of the sessions is an awesome and gorgeous thing. The band here is Phill Todd, Melanie Crowley, Alex Neilsen and Ben Reynolds (at various points) and the sonics are a sluffy combo of synthesizer camel-toe, guitar of a very Jandekian nature, and the clatter of pencils in a metal cup. Portions of it are utterly brilliant extensions of a very specific kind of post-genre bedroom improvisation, others mine a very classicist post-Hawkwind space-shaft-continuum, others just sound like a mess. Which means this's a wild, beautiful ride and one well worth taking.

**Willie Lane**, one of our fave guitarists from the haze-light of New England, and a critical element in the MV/EE Golden Road investigations, relocated to some weird other road in Pennsylvania and we were sad. But now we are brightened! A message beam has been fireflied into our homes via an amazing re-cording collab betwixt Willie and Grant Acker (gtrist from ex-Siltbreeze lost-art spacialists UN). They are called the **Slurp Dogs**, the tape is called **Postal**



Bill Nace

**Licks** and it's on the consistently worthwhile earth-psyche label from Belgium, **Sloow Tapes**. Real singing amplifier bent note drone wah magic mind music here and all in high order. Super recommended.

Our fave saxophonist list is one on which **Wally Shoup's** name is prominently displayed. This Washington state dadaist is an alto player, visual artist and musical composer of the highest order. And he has recently been present on a pantload of precious poop. One of the best is **Suite: Bittersweet** (**Strange Attractors**), an LP which features a trio of Wally, guitarist **Nels Cline** and drummer **Greg Campbell**. The session was a radio broadcast from '05, and it is a motherfucker. Wally bloots and slurs notes like a Tristano-ite gone berserk, Nels fills the air with intense mid-range squeedle, and Greg slugs them both with fists wrapped in metal. Especially on the b-side, it's a goddamn beautiful thing, both fully blasted and under control every inch of the way. Not as recent, but equally brilliant are the two LPs cut by the trio of Wally, drummer **Chris Corsano** and saxophonist, **Paul Flaherty**. One is **Bounced Check** (**Records**), the other is **Blank Check** (**Tyffus**), and both are full-on spankers. Recorded one fateful night in Seattle, **Bounce** blares a bit more, but **Blank** wiggles like an eel. The playing format (two horns and a drum) is pretty maxist, especially with Corsano on tubs.

Speaking of Corsano, this young honorary Limey has just had his first solo CDR, **The Young Cricketeer**, reissued on LP by **Family Vineyard**. It doesn't sound like much is different, except the playing format. Recorded at home in Manchester, it's a brilliant mix of Chris's fantastic percussion work, plus the crazy tootling and tinkling that're probably what got him hired by Bjork. Shoup then raises his shiny pate again for **The Sound of Speed** CD by **Ghidra** (**Sol Disk**). Another trio, this one features **Bill Horist's** guitar and **Mike Peterson's** drums. **Sound** is their second release, and it's a great combination of Beefheart-damaged psych-noise string energy, intensely focused percussion scrums, and Wally's anticy keening sax-work. Nicer work, Shoup don't do.

Always a treat to get a new issue of **Mike Stax's Ugly Things**. This guy has cracked the code on garage greatness, and he's consistently producing the best music 'zine this side of *Kicks*. Issue 26 has a great Rob Tyner interview, a fantastic piece on the Pop Rivets (Billy Childish's pre-Milkshakes group) and more sweet content than you can shake yr bangs at. If you are at all interested in rock & roll, you cannot afford to miss an issue. UT has also published a new book, which we've started, but not quite finished.

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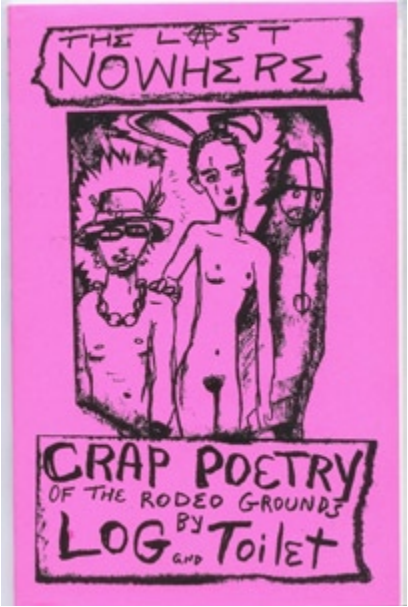
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gets pulled at the end —always a sign of success). Hot stuff from a label with nefarious psycho-graphic aesthetics. The LP is obi-banded with soft yet supple plastic netting and a pin featuring a hirsute asian bondage woman. Crazy. Make sure you grab the



Rulla **Arserection** cassette from Trash Ritual as well for utter sound gutting.

Seems like we've mentioned **Chrome** a couple times in passing. It should be noted that Jim Gibson's newly-reactivated **Noiseville** label has followed their superb Helios Creed two-LP set with reissues of three crucial Chrome albums on CD: **Alien Sountracks**, **Half Machine Lip Moves** and **Third from the Sun**. These albums track the early development of this legendary Bay Area psych combo, from their garage roots into their deepest Neu/Suicide trance states, on to the syncretically fused punk-space hybrid they perfected. Three great albums. And if you write Noiseville, don't forget to ask about the **Wicked King Wicker**. It is a brutal guitar piece taken to a near-Skullflower level. We shit you not.

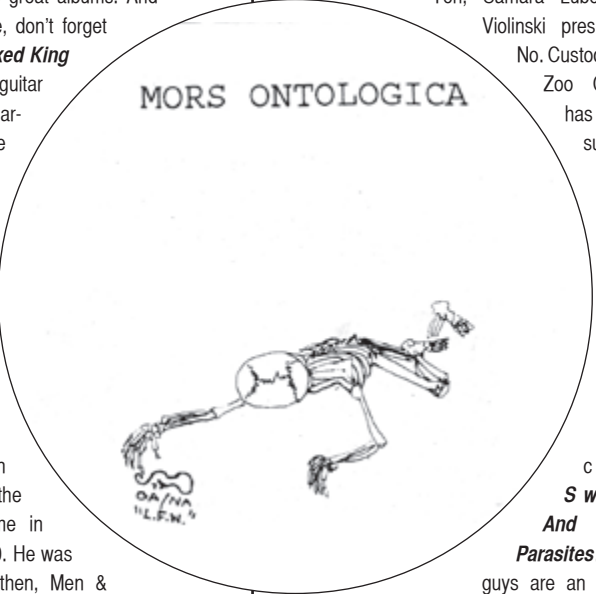
The new issue of David Greenberger's **Duplex Planet** is out. It's #180, and brings to mind how long ago it was that we first ran into David. It was back when he was working at the Duplex Nursing Home in Jamaica Plain in 1980. He was involved in a band then, Men & Volts, which had originally been formed to play Beefheart covers. He was also doing a strange little magazine of interviews with the nursing home's residents, documenting the depth of their histories as well as the wildly funny answers they'd give to questions they couldn't quite figure out how to answer. The issues were built around themes and there were some classics. David has done lots of *Duplex*-related work, releasing a book by the almost indescribable poet, Ernest Noye Brookings, then curating a series of albums on which various bands sets Ernie's

words to music. He has also developed a series of great spoken pieces, which he does live and on CD with various musicians. He has also been on NPR fairly regularly as a music and social commentator. He's a total genius, and has really been involved in some amazing projects over the last three decades. Anyway, you can check out the *Duplex Planet* site for more info, but this new issue is really the berries. It's another "music issue," and is illustrated mostly by pictures of the '60s bands David himself had: Happy Scab, Scotland Yard Fantasy, etc. Issue 180 is a good one, and reminds us what an important cultural figure Greenberger is. If you don't know his work, check it out.

No one mentioned to us that the genius Santa Cruz band, Residual Echoes, had imploded. So imagine our surprise when we got the eponymous LP by **San Francisco Water Cooler**, a band birthed from Residual Echoes' ashes (**KDVS Recordings**). The album's formatting is a bit irksome (one side's 45, the other's 33, making for much confusion amongst stoners), but the sounds are great. There's a very psychedelic whiff to the guitar, but it's all done inside a sorta *neu noise* context that blends keys with gloop with whatsis in a truly modern way. Pretty amazing stuff.

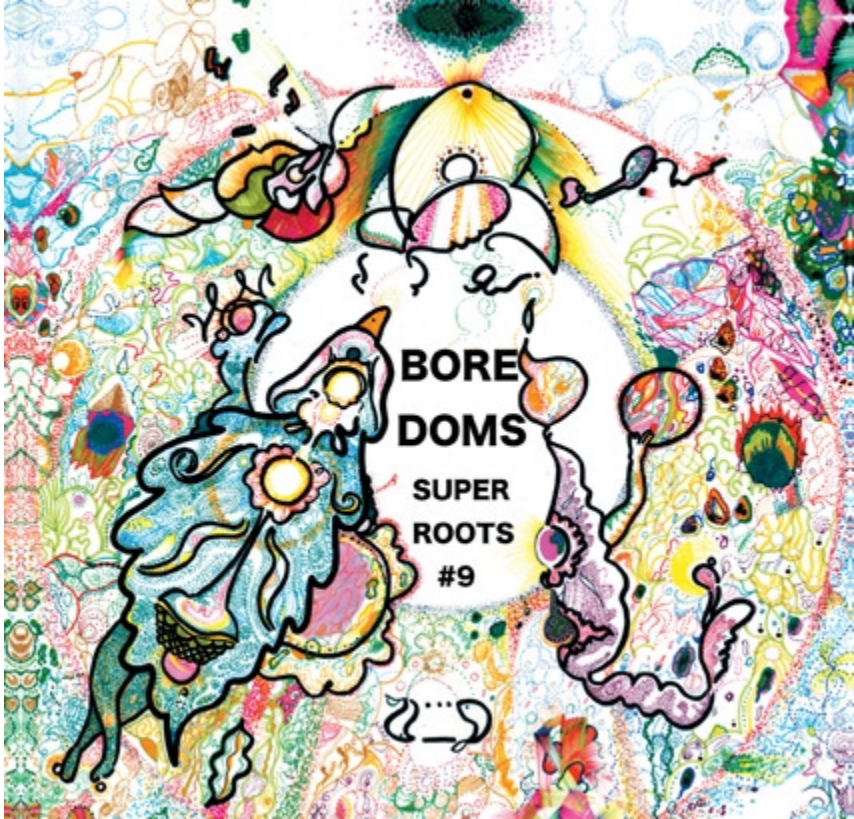
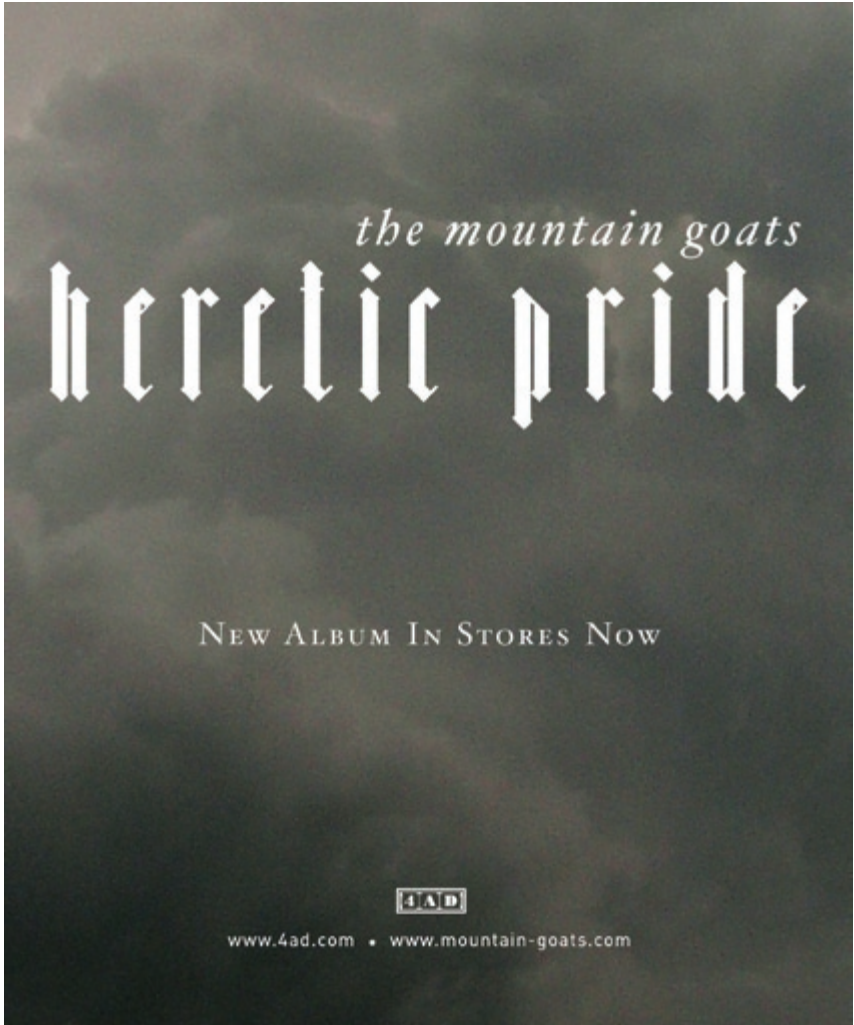
New tape label **Custodian, Color Zoo Containers** hits a high sonic marker with a sweet foray into heavy, heavy excitable music/bliss blizzard drone love with the one man Oakland dude (since relocated to Prague) **Jorge Boehringer** aka **Core Of The Coalman**. His tape **Canarsie** is blindingly beautiful, a scorched sky of hyper sound and it will leave you stunned and spinning. Boehringer's been around the Bay Area scene, hanging out with the experimental head-cases at Mills College and local freaks like Rubber O Cement, Gowns *et al* for a few years. Dude is sick and his violin noise makes us think that the violin is turning out to be the premier instrument of the mid 1st decade 2000 avant/experimental scene (check C. Spencer

Yeh, Samara Lubelski). Did Violinski presage this? No. Custodian, Color Zoo Containers has also issued a cassette by **Take Up**

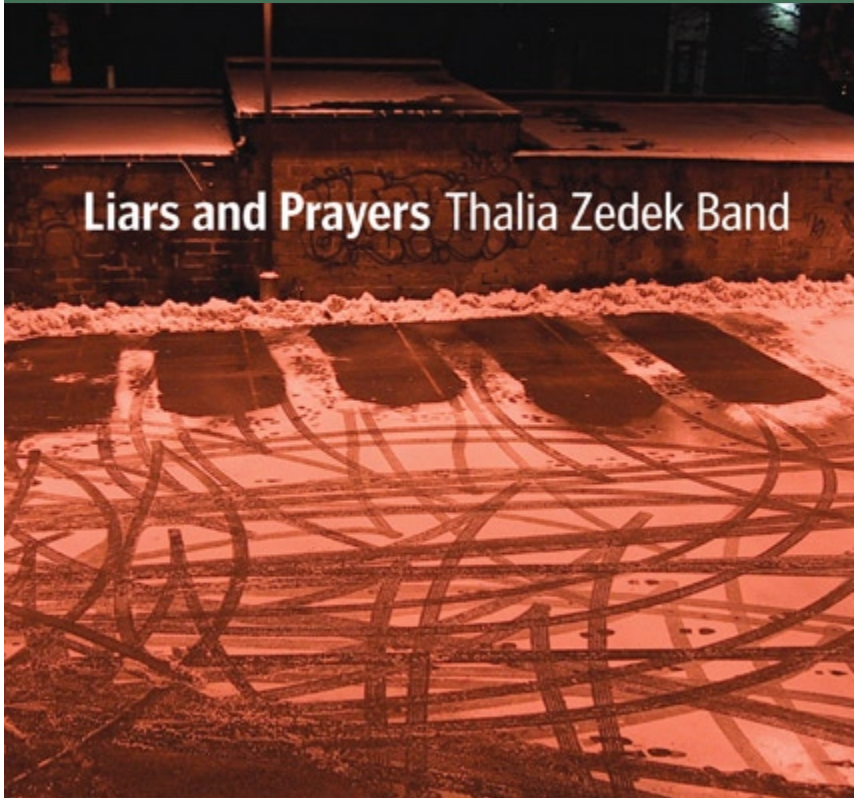


Serpents called **Swollen And Full Of Parasites**. These guys are an S.F. crew of rowdies, since located to Colorado, and they have the classic knees on the floor, butts high, hands on the knobs gutter improv. Like black metal, it's the only way to really have some fun these days. Both these releases are worth seeking and sooner than later as there are less than 50 copies of each. We found ours at **Aquarius Records** in S.F.

While we're hanging, happily, around S.F., a city which can still bring on the hootch charm so lost from the island of Manhattan, let us hep you to the swarm-



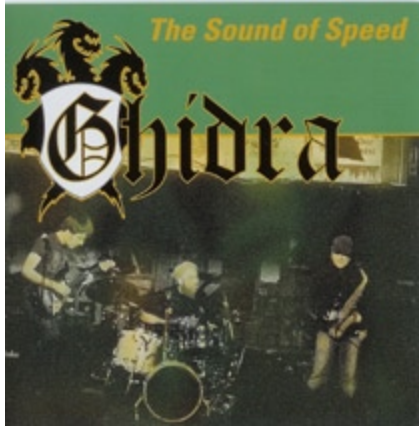
**Super Roots 9** is a concert recorded on Christmas Eve 2004 in Japan and features a 20-person choir. The CD comes packaged in a special custom-made Mini Gatefold LP style jacket and includes a 40 page perfect bound booklet.



Over two decades, **Thalia Zedek** through **Come, Uzi, Live Skull** and on her own has earned a reputation as one of the strongest vocalists and most pronounced creative presences in music. **Liars and Prayers** is her first record with her new full band and a masterwork. Limited edition LP version comes with a free download of the entire album.

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ing density of **Usputuspu**d, which is the one-man slow burn of this cat Matt from local panic trance rockers Wildidlilie. The cassette release **Liturgical Alcoholik** (White Lodge Tapes) is a real sweet and weird mind-scoping trip and definitely worth yr seek.

Any old school Bay Area improviser/spirit music freak can tell you that **Henry Kuntz** has, since the late '70s, been one of the most audacious and interesting free improvisers on the scene non-stop. His documentation has been typically subterranean starting from his initial recorded sounds on Henry Kaiser's 1977 *Ice Death* LP, a flashpoint record for many a guitar experimentalist (Jim O'Rourke *e.g.*). For most of the '70s Kuntz edited and published a great newsletter called *Bells* (available to read online at [www.metropolis.com/bells](http://www.metropolis.com/bells)). Throughout the '80s Kuntz released LPs, cassettes and CDs on his own Hummingbird imprint of solo and group free-playing, all of which have amazing moments of deep spontaneous thought-love-composition. A fantastic compilation of this material, plus recordings from Kuntz's **Opeye** project self described as "avant-shamanic trance jazz," can be had on the beautiful four cassette boxset, *Speed Of Culture Light*, from Belgium label **Bread & Animals**. The label plans on systematically re-releasing the Hummingbird cassettes throughout this year. Essential music for the ancient/modern axis alive in any sentient brain. And each package comes with complimentary plastic dinosaur. So no excuses.

Been keeping an eyeball on this **Tompkins Square** label since they issued that *Imaginational Anthem* comp back in whatever year it was. The label has developed a very cool catalogue of stuff, ranging from reissues of American Primitive guitarists (**Robbie Basho's** *Venus in Cancer*, **Harry Taussig's** *Fate Is Only Once*), parallel contemporary work (**Berkeley Guitar** and **James Blackshaw's** *The Cloud of Unknowing*), newly recorded coots (**Spencer Moore**, **Charlie Louvin**, **Ran Blake**), and a mind-blowing new comp. *People Take Warning!* is a collection of murder ballads and disaster songs, so strongly collated and beautifully presented that it rivals any of **Revenant's** or **Dust to Digital's** recent triumphs. Three wild CDs of lost sounds recorded between 1913 and 1938. Some real nice stuff about the Titanic and Hindenberg. They really knew how to balladize the situation in those days. Fucking cute!

Another damn cute reissue is **Robert Martin's** *Long Goodbye* LP (Yik Yak), which has rather mysterious origins. It may have been recorded originally in '85 or so, by some California surf dude. But it appeared in '01 as a CDR and got passed around at stoner parties in Northern California. Anyway, it eventually ended up on LP, but its story is no more certain than before. It's acoustic and homemade feeling, rather lo-fi. There are some similarities to other

outsider stuff of that period, but they seem incidental, and the overall vibe (if not the sound) is actually closer to the Bobby Brown/Carolyn Kleyn wing of California surftown weirdos. But it's not as showy as anything those guys ever cut. Just low-key, damaged and nice. We keep thinking it's veering into some sorta Christian swamp, but can never catch it actually doing so. Huh. One thing we've seen it compared to is **Bobb Trimble**, so it's worth noting that Bobb's first two legendary LPs, *Iron Curtain Innocence* and *Harvest of Dreams* have been reissued by **Secretly Canadian**. We've always loved *Harvest*, with its bizarre-world take on Marc Bolan pixie carnivals, but the real revelation has been *Iron Curtain*. For whatever reason, this new issue, which presents it in hermetic form (rather than as part of a twofer) and its apocalypso-folk-psych-pop damage is a mysterious and wonderful thing to behold.

*Alright, those wanting to run the risk of our attentions are directed to send two (2) copies of DVDs, LPs, books, mags, cassettes, nude snaps, etc. to BULL TONGUE, P.O. BOX 627, NORTHAMPTON MA 01061 USA.*

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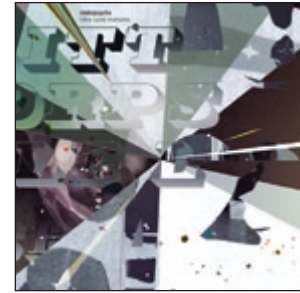
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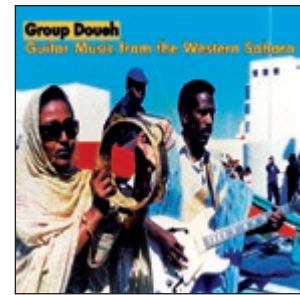
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TOUCH



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Opposite page, Eryn Branch wears **GREY ANT** To The Point mini dress, **POPPY AND QUAIL** white braided leather and feather headband.

This page, Joseph Harper wears **GREY ANT** Taffeta print men's pant, vintage shirt and shoes.





Above, Eryn wears **GREY ANT** Cat tank over **AMERICAN APPAREL** white tank, **GREY ANT** belted jean shorts.

Above right, Joseph wears **GREY ANT** yellow silkscreen t-shirt, **GREY ANT** Spring zip-up jumpsuit.

Right, Joseph wears **AMERICAN APPAREL** striped tank under **GREY ANT** Spring overalls. Eryn wears **GREY ANT** Pyramid dress, **POPPY AND QUAIL** burgundy braided feather headband.

Opposite Page, Eryn wears **GREY ANT** Cardigan Clip-on, **POPPY AND QUAIL** feather and turquoise headband, vintage necklace.





# DO THE MATH

By Dave Reeves, PhD.

"A joke is an epitaph on the death of a feeling."—*Nietzsche*



If we are in Iraq looking for the guys that did the Nineeleven caper we're stupid because, according to the FAA, pilots are usually among the first people to arrive at a crash site.

The only other 9/11 joke I've heard is:

Knock, knock.  
*Who's there?*  
Nine eleven.  
*Nine eleven who?*  
You said you would never forget me.

Yeah, it's not funny. Not just because the feeling isn't dead. It plays on the fact that 9/11 is an old heartbreak whore of ours, the one who unfettered our basest desires, which we'll be paying for for the rest of our children's lives. Har de har.

Your kids are going to be pissed when they see the pictures Colin Powell pointed at when he talked us into World War Three.

"Daddy, is it true you guys started World War Three over a picture of a meth lab out in the desert?"

"Well honey see we didn't have no education back then and so we didn't know that nuclear fission takes whole buildings full of advanced ceramics, Germans and yellow cake uranium to manufacture..."

It's good that we can't tell a meth lab from a nuclear bomb-making facility because it means that our elders saw fit to give us the gift of bliss, which more judgemental people would call ignorance. With this bliss we are free to see the world without any preconceived notions based on science or pre-known facts.

Back when people got educations they were indoctrinated so thoroughly that they believed crazy shit like the Civil War was fought to free black slaves. Anybody stupid enough to think that white people went to war and killed other white people for the rights of black people will be stupid enough to believe that we are looking for Osama Bin Laden in the Iraqiian Permian basin.

That's right: Though you've been taught that the American Civil War was some kind of freedom ride gone horribly awry, it was, in fact, an economic war. The propaganda that the War Between the States was about freeing slaves was made up for a speech called the Gettysburg Address, much as the "Axis of Evil" was made up by a speechwriter. All the proof you need is to witness the war being fought in the streets of America to jail black people today. Putting one out of six black men behind bars is a pretty good start at re-slaving America, chains and all.

How did we get so stupid? Practice, man, practice. Our acquiescence was bought behind the persistent machinations of faux-Fox News, whose confusions enabled Diebold machines to send Americans to do just that. Five years later, 4,000 soldiers have boldly died behind a mission yet to be defined. On top of

# CULLING TIME

that we didn't even get the damn oil. Greed was good, back when it was smart.

Considering that the war industry is America's biggest export, you may wonder how we got in a war and a recession at the same time. Plus, if we were to leave Iraq right now, some Pol Pots would jump up in the vaccum to turn our Fallujahs into Sinaloas. Fallujaloas. I can already hear the heroin getting stronger.

to cut George's head off with a butter knife on youtube while screaming some religious babble. Let's flip the script on these Semites, like an arab killing a stranger. We could leave the Bush women and children alive to be sold as curiosities in brothels, then chased from village to village in a hail of stones, allowed to live as a reminder of what happens to smug, stupid assholes who steal elections.

This nutty buddy of mine called the



# HOPE

With this in mind we must be sure that Bush must not be allowed to kill himself. It is our job as responsible Americans to make an example of this man. I propose that the decider, Laura and the twins be waterboarded to death at the Lincoln Memorial. If something of this sort is not done, World War Five will be blamed on you and me for the rest of our miserable lives.

It is a matter of style. The reason why Italians don't get the proper blame for the Euro-fascism of Hitler and the boys is because the Italian populace punished the figurehead properly. They strung Mussolini and his bitch wife up by their heels and beat them naked and dead, in the middle of Rome. This act allowed the world to forgive Italy for sparking the pitiless hell which burned Europe and Japan to cinders. If the Italians hadn't beat Il Duce like that then the world might have known the Pope was a gay Hitler way back then.

The responsible populace needs to do something to exonerate ourselves from being duped by ol' George. It would be apropos

Constitution of the United States of America suggests an armed bunch of guys and gals are supposed to organize into a militia to do this. It's like our forefathers were Nostradamuses to see a crooked politico clusterfuck like this coming.

I suggest some kind of hipster army. Why not? Jodie Foster had an army. It was only one crazy guy, but he shot Reagan. I notice George Bush is still unshot. I heard they let Hinckley out. John if you are reading this: "Try, try again." You should be even more ashamed to let Jodie Foster live in a world with George Bush as president.

We must crusade for the good and get the mySpace poseurs to put the skateboards down long enough to get hurt for something more than a hobby. It's springtime in the revolution, time to get down to the nut cutting. Real cowboys call it the "culling time." Every head of the herd is to be saved or chopped off.

The price to join the militia is the procurement of some sort of protection system more realistic than calling the cops. Those that can

take care of themselves look forward to whatever form the apocalypse takes. If you are not ready to save yourself, then what good would it do for a militia to save you? That's two soldiers down for somebody that didn't have the sense to survive in the first place.

Get some boots. Armies are made of leather and rubber. Procure a flashlight, shotgun, water, motorcycle, siphon hose, iodine, sleeping bag, knife, lighter and set of cojones. If you have these things, you are a militiaman or militiawoman.

Say you don't watch enough news to be mad enough to shoot anybody. Let me have your shotgun and you'll be drafted to be a goddamn Politician for The Cause. In a world where Bush has a DUI, Obama admits to messing with cocaine, and Clinton had cigar sex with a girl in a Gap dress you have been thrust into the arena of the politically viable. Your peccadillo body modifications, aderal addictions, litanies of filthy text messages and binges of internet porn perversions have not freed you from being an American. Indeed, modern America is why you're a modern American, and vice versa. When a major presidential contender has been cuckolded by a tobacco product you have to really limbo to be beneath being a viable candidate anymore.

America took a page from the playbook used at the great Cradle of Wars of Dien Bien Phu, Little Big Horn and Israel: build a fort somewhere surrounded on all sides by hostiles, preferably at the bottom of a hill or a heights. Supply the Indians with rudimentary weapons and then make them mad as hell. Make sure to give the enemy plenty of chances with exposed supply lines to inflict damage so that the following wrath and retribution seems warranted. Occupy enemy territory using whatever means necessary. Repeat this process until the world is a Mall. Yee haw.

Our generation apes the criminal with the tattooes, the pimp *cap* wiggerdom and self-medication. Turns out that these are good impulses, because, like Hakim (if that is his real name) Bey says, "there is always the element of the criminal in the Nietzschean overman." So listen to your tattooes, you big overman, and be criminal enough to take the country back.

I'm here to tell you that America is good real estate, as long as you didn't actually buy any of it on a subprime loan. See, the real America can't be bought, you got to take it like our forefathers did. The time to flank these assholes is now, while their national guard troops are off on the fourth tour of duty.

Until then, ain't nothing changed. America is up in an Indian war dressed like Custer again. There is talk of retreating out the back door of Iraq, also known as Iran. A bold move for sure, soon to be glorified in the cave drawings left by the survivors of the near future. I got a 9/11 joke: "Fission Accomplished." The reason that one isn't funny is because it's not a joke. ■

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